

# Ellen G. White & Inspiration

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*Was she the  
“spirit of  
prophecy”  
in the  
Seventh-day  
Adventist  
Church?*

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By Maurice Barnett

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**Cover Design by:  
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**The Preceptor Co.  
P. O. Box 22283  
Beaumont, Texas 77720**



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## INTRODUCTION

This booklet is written primarily to inform non-Adventists about the subject at hand, with sufficient explanation of backgrounds to understand the points made. It is also written to challenge the thinking of Seventh-day Adventist people about what they have accepted as their authority. The material is plain in its presentation, but presented with the kindest of feelings for the readers, especially the Adventist reader. Though not an Adventist, the author is acquainted with Adventists and has a great concern for their spiritual and eternal welfare. It is prayerfully hoped that this booklet will be read with an open mind.

The author of this booklet has been an evangelist for the past thirty-one years, working with various local churches in different parts of the country. For the past eighteen years he has worked with one congregation in Phoenix, Arizona. His educational background includes two and a half years at the University of Arkansas, with a B.A. in Religion from Harding College, Searcy, Arkansas, with additional graduate studies. A great amount of his study has been on various cults. He has published two volumes of material on Jehovah's Witnesses, and two volumes on Mormonism, along with other booklets and tracts.

## Chapter One

### ELLEN G. WHITE AND INSPIRATION

The *Adventist Review* of July 15, 1982, p. 3, carried a one page statement by the General Conference of the Adventist Church. It is a revised statement of belief, they say, as of June 14, 1982 titled *The Inspiration and Authority of the Ellen G. White Writings*. Some of the statements made in the article are very clear as to Adventist beliefs, and others are outright misrepresentations and contradictions. The Adventist Church is presently being torn apart over the role of Ellen White, the authenticity and authority of her writings, and the major doctrines that are so closely connected with her. They are losing members by the hundreds, and will continue to do so for some time to come.

The various subjects of the present controversy are not new; there were attempts on the same subjects made in the last century and again in this one. The present attack is far more powerful and damaging than the previous ones; there are many more people involved and more evidence to go on. Ronald Numbers, a medical historian in their college medical program, and a member of a several generation Adventist family, wrote a book about Ellen White's teachings on health, but placed her in historical setting. The book, *Prophetess of Health*, amply shows that her teachings on health were no different than the health reform movement that started before she came along. The evidence shows she borrowed heavily from others while insisting that it all came from God. The book was masterfully done and continues to send shock waves through their ranks. Numbers is no longer connected with the Adventist educational programs. Walter T. Rea, an Adventist minister for thirty-three years, was in process of writing a complete Bible commentary with nothing but Ellen White comments when he discovered just how extensively she borrowed from other writers. On the basis of his research he challenges anyone to find even twenty percent of her writings that were original and not borrowed from others. His 1982 book, *The White Lie*, has picked up and amplified the shock that *Prophetess of Health* dealt the Adventists. His research forced him to renounce his faith in Ellen White and his feelings about being duped for all his years with them is evident in his book. Dr. Desmond Ford, one of their top theologians and scholars, was also fired. He rejected the Adventist position on

the "Sanctuary," showing convincingly that it is unscriptural. He has convinced many other Adventists of the same thing. Ford continues to try to hold on to Ellen White. He will awaken one of these days to the fact that he cannot reject the sanctuary position, which she claims to have taught by "inspiration," and still accept her as an inspired prophetess.

In the article in the *Adventist Review* the following statements are made:

"We believe that Ellen White was inspired by the Holy Spirit and that her writings, the product of inspiration, are particularly applicable and authoritative to Seventh-day Adventists . . . We do not believe that the quality or degree of inspiration in the writings of Ellen White is different from that of Scripture."

The Adventist position is that of *conceptual inspiration*. That is, she is supposed to have received just the thought, and put everything into her own words. This, they claim, is true of the Bible also. As we shall see, in trying to justify Ellen White they wind up degrading the Bible they claim to uphold, lessening faith in its reliability. It will be noted that, according to Adventists, she was *just as inspired as any Bible writer or non-writing prophet*. In *Ministry* of October, 1981, p. 8, they say:

"We believe the revelation and inspiration of both the Bible and Ellen White's writings to be of equal quality. The superintendence of the Holy Spirit was just as careful and thorough in one case as in the other."

Ellen White taught, and Adventists believe, that there is no difference between Mrs. White's inspiration and that of the Bible. Let's allow her to tell us about it:

"I am just as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in relating or writing a vision, as in having the vision. It is impossible for me to call up things which have been shown me unless the Lord brings them before me at the time that he is pleased to have me relate or write them." *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 2, p. 293.

"Others have called me a prophetess, but I have never assumed that title. I have not felt that it was my duty thus to designate myself. Those who boldly assume that they are prophets in this day are often a reproach to the cause of Christ . . . My work includes much more than this name signifies. I regard myself as a messenger, entrusted by the Lord with messages for His people . . . my commission embraces the work of a prophet, but it does not end there. It embraces much more than the minds of those who have been sowing the seeds of unbelief can comprehend." *Selected Messages*. Vol. 1, p. 36.

"In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the testimonies of His Spirit. There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue. But will they profit by His teachings? Will they receive His reproofs and heed His warnings? God will accept of no partial obedience; He will sanction no compromise

with self." *Testimonies*, Vol. 4, pp. 147-148.

"When men venture to criticize the Word of God, they venture on sacred, holy ground, and had better fear and tremble and hide their wisdom as foolishness. God sets no man to pronounce judgment on His word, selecting some things as inspired and discrediting others as uninspired. The testimonies have been treated in the same way; but God is not in this." *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 23.

It is clear that she claimed that all she said came from God, and it was necessary to hear and obey her as much as the Bible. We will note more of this shortly.

The authority of these writings is clearly stated by Ellen White. From the beginning she insisted on adherence to what she said as the word of God:

"If you seek to turn aside the counsel of God to suit yourselves, if you lessen the confidence of God's people in the testimonies He has sent them, you are rebelling against God as certainly as were Korah, Dathan, and Abiram." *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 66.

"God is either teaching His church, reproving their wrongs and strengthening their faith, or He is not. This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work for the past thirty years bears the stamp of God or the stamp of the enemy. There is no halfway work in the matter. The *Testimonies* are of the Spirit of God, or of the devil. In arraying yourself against the servants of God you are doing a work either for God or for the devil." *Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 230.

"The Spirit fell upon me and I was taken off in vision. I saw the state of some who stood on present truth, but disregarded the visions, — the way God had chosen to teach in some cases, those who erred from Bible truth. I saw that in striking against the visions they did not strike against the worm — the feeble instrument that God spake through; but against the Holy Ghost. I saw it was a small thing to speak against the instrument, but it was dangerous to slight the words of God. I saw if they were in error and God chose to show them their errors through visions, and they disregarded the teachings of God in visions, they would be left to take their own way, and run in the way of error, and think they were right, until they would find it out too late. Then in the time of trouble I heard them cry to God in agony — 'Why didst thou not show us our wrong that we might have got right and been ready for this time?' . . . He spoke through visions, and he gave you up to your own ways, to be filled with your own doings." 1849 broadside.

That is very clear in regard to authority and the necessity of obeying what she said, because it "came from God." Although Adventists insist, as she did, that she was not *verbally* inspired, we note that on occasion she did claim that. From her Diary for May 20, 1905 we see an entry that related to a controversy of the time. She said:

"I had been very sick, and yet had tried to speak to the people and the Lord had strengthened me greatly. I had not knowledge of my words. The Lord spoke indeed through me." *Manuscript Release 59-1905* (White Estate).



It certainly seems that if the Lord was able to verbally inspire a prophet, and on occasion did so, why would any chance for misunderstanding and error be taken in other "revelations?" But, here's another statement from her on this:

"Before I stand on my feet, I have no thought of speaking as plainly as I do. But the Spirit of God rests upon me with power, and I cannot but speak the words given me. I dare not withhold one word of the testimony . . . I speak the words given me by a power higher than human power, and I cannot, if I would, recall one sentence." (Diary, January 10, 1890) *Ms 22, 1890, White Estate.*

In addition to this, Arthur L. White, her grandson, quoted two statements from her to this effect:

"I am trying to catch the very words and expressions that were made in reference to this matter, and as my pen hesitates a moment, the appropriate words come to my mind . . . While I am writing out important matters, He (the Holy Spirit) is beside me helping me . . . and when I am puzzled for a fit word with which to express my thoughts, He brings it clearly and distinctly to my mind." *The Ellen G. White Writings*, p. 22.

Arthur White then turns around and denies any verbal inspiration on her part, but that is what she claimed for herself nonetheless.

Adventists have likened Ellen White to the non-literary prophets, mostly of the Old Testament. They try to soften the claims of inspiration by such comparison. However, the non-writing prophets were just as inspired as those who wrote. They were equal in every respect to the writers of the Bible, which, by the Adventists own argument makes Mrs. White equal to every prophet in the Bible! She must, therefore, be accepted as equal to scripture. Seeing that she was supposed to be *equal in every respect of inspiration to the Bible writers and non-writing prophets*, then she must be accepted as equal to the Bible (we will notice more of this in the next chapter). As a matter of fact, Arthur L. White presents three ways in which she is *superior to the Bible*. In a series of articles appearing in the *Adventist Review* of January and February, 1978, he states this at the very beginning:

"As Seventh-day Adventists we are uniquely fortunate in approaching this question. We are not left to find our way, drawing conclusions only from writings penned 19 centuries and more ago, which have come down to us through varied transcriptions and translations. Concerning inspiration, with us it is an almost contemporary matter, for we have had a prophet in our midst . . . What is more, rather than having in our possession only relatively short documents or a handful of letters, as is the case with the extant records of the Bible prophets, we have the full range of Ellen G. White writings penned through a period of 70 years, embodying her published books, her 4,600 periodical articles, and her manuscripts, letters, and diaries. We have also

the testimonies of her contemporaries — eyewitness accounts of those who lived and worked closely with her. Both she and they discussed many points touching on the visions and on the manner in which the light was imparted to her, and how she, in turn, conveyed the messages to those for whom they were intended. In other words, the eyewitnesses discussed the operation of inspiration . . . Further, she wrote in a modern language, so a large number of people today can study her writings in the original language, without needing to depend on a translation. Rarely, too, is it necessary to depend upon a transcription." *Inspiration and the Ellen G. White Writings*, reprint, p. 3.

Kenneth Wood, editor of the *Adventist Review*, endorsed the articles by Arthur White. They consider Ellen White to be superior to the Bible in these and many other ways. Yet, in the face of Arthur White's argument they admit the following in the *Adventist Review*, July 26, 1979: "*Most of the original drafts of Ellen White's books are no longer in existence.*" Or, "*In the main, the working papers involved in the preparation of the Ellen G. White Conflict of the Ages books have not been preserved.*" "*Most of the 'original autographs' of Ellen White's works do not exist!* They only have printed editions.

The question of *infallibility* of her writings has arisen from time to time. G. A. Irwin, President of the General Conference 1897-1901, wrote in a tract that — "It is from the standpoint of light that has come through the Spirit of Prophecy that the question will be considered, believing as we do that the Spirit of Prophecy is the only infallible interpreter of Bible principles, since it is Christ through this agency giving the real meaning of his own words," (*The Mark of the Beast*, p. 3). Yet, Ellen White denied any infallibility, as have Adventists since her time. However, Webster's Dictionary defines *infallible* as being "*incapable of error in defining doctrines touching faith or morals . . . not liable to mislead, deceive, or disappoint.*" What that means in regard to Ellen White is that her writings are *capable of error in defining doctrines touching faith or morals, and are liable to mislead or deceive*. This is by her own insistence about her writings. But, more seriously, seeing that her "inspiration" is held to be identical with the Bible, we must accept that the Bible is just as liable to error in faith and morals and to mislead and deceive. That's the consequence of their position. Indeed, this is spelled out very well in *Spectrum*, June, 1982. Dr. Alden Thompson, professor of religion at Walla Walla College, reviews Walter Rea's book, *The White Lie*. The attack on Biblical credibility in order to explain what Ellen White did is evident; the Bible is brought down to the level of "inspiration" and credibility that they conceive Ellen White to have had. But, to equate what Ellen White did with what we find in the Bible

taxes credulity in the extreme. Note some things Thompson says in his article:

"In Rea's case, an additional assumption is also evident that has deep roots in the minds of conservative believers: true prophets do not change. If, then, in a weak moment, one discovers both *sources* and *change*, disillusionment and the 'cover-up' argument almost inevitably follow.

"The 'cover-up' argument is clearly the most difficult for conservative believers to handle. But I am convinced that Rea's experience provides some of the best evidence as to why there has been a necessary and well-intentioned 'cover-up' or, put in another way, why Ellen White and her assistants gradually — even reluctantly — revealed the human methods by which the prophet operated. Full disclosure would have led some to conclude that God was *'nonexistent in their program'*" (p. 207).

"The Biblical precedent for a 'cover-up' was established by Christ himself: 'I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now' (John 16:12)." p. 51.

The "cover-up" that Thompson is referring to is the hiding of Ellen White's extensive borrowing from other authors, and even her doctrinal changes from time to time. Notice that he attributes the authority for her practice to Jesus. However, there is a wide difference between what Jesus was talking about and what Ellen White did. Thompson's argument is only degrading to the Lord and the Bible. Yet, he continues with this. Note:

"Rea has refused to come to grips with the human element in Scripture, such as the differences in parallel accounts and the use of noninspired sources by the biblical writers. . . . A second reaction to Rea's material is the position that Rea himself seems to have adopted. It involves a critical stance towards Ellen White and a non-critical stance towards Scripture. Rea is still gripped by the authority of Scripture. As long as he can avoid questioning Scripture in the way that he has questioned Ellen White's writings, his faith is secure, albeit ill-informed. Those who are deeply steeped in the Christian tradition are often able to maintain this position for themselves without recognizing how vulnerable it is for open and inquiring minds." pp. 51-52.

His arguments here are of the same sort atheists have been making for years. We have heard the same thing from Mormons as well, who have to degrade and downplay the Bible to make room for *their* "inspired" prophets. Notice that Thompson places Ellen White and the Bible on the same level. The Bible has the same frailties, short-comings, and mistakes as Ellen White. He insists that one cannot criticize her without making equal charges against the Bible; they stand or fall together. It is no wonder, with teaching like this, that so many Adventists have a problem keeping any faith at all once they give up faith in Ellen White. The same problem exists in dealing with Mormons. Once a Mor-

mon has awakened to the errors of Mormonism he is prone to become an atheist. The Bible is thrown out with their former faith. After all, if an Adventist is taught that the Bible has the same fallible kind of inspiration as Ellen White, when they give her up the tendency is to give up the Bible, too.

When Thompson talks about "open and inquiring minds" he is charging Rea, and others like him, with having "closed" minds. However, one does not have to look far to see just who is open-minded. The constant assertion is made about the Bible writers "borrowing" from uninspired sources, just like Ellen White. When we note that Walter Rea has proven that 90% of most everything Ellen White wrote, including *The Great Controversy*, was lifted from other authors, then we see the magnitude of the Adventist charge against the Bible. The attempt to parallel the Bible and Ellen White in this regard is baseless and they need to present the evidence or drop the assertion. The same is true in regard to the atheist arguments concerning differences in parallel accounts.

It should be clear that what Adventists claim, in many instances, is contradictory, not only between statements and positions they present, but with Scripture.

## Chapter Two

### DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY FOR THE SDA CHURCH

We have previously looked at the claims of Ellen White to inspiration as well as what Seventh-day Adventists claim for her. The relation of such a position to the Bible is clearly drawn by them; her inspiration is *exactly the same as the Bible writers and prophets*. The *Adventist Review* of July 15, 1982 carried a one page statement of belief from their ruling body on the inspiration of Ellen White. This was a "revised" statement as of June 14, 1982. Following is one of the statements made:

"We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White may be used as the basis of doctrine."

This statement is purely propaganda. In all issues in their Church she is called on to settle the matter. In what has been presented as "The Dallas Statement," the 1980 General Conference hammered out their statement of beliefs. Following is statement 17:

"One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, *her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth and provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction*. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teachings and experience must be tested." (Emphasis added.)

Note the emphasized portion that covers the authority of Ellen White in the areas cited. That most certainly involves doctrinal matters. Francis D. Nichol, in his defense of Mrs. White, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, says:

"Mrs. White's teachings on doctrine are those held by Seventh-day Adventists. Thus the defense of our teachings, as found in our denominational works, is really a defense of Mrs. White, even as it is a defense of the doctrinal soundness of every other person who believes and promotes those beliefs." p. 16.

The acknowledgements page of this book states that it was written under the direction of the Defense Literature Committee. The members of that Committee included Arthur L. White, grandson of Ellen White, and J. L. McElhany, President of the General Conference from 1936 to 1950. They certainly should have understood what place Ellen White had among Adventists. In the Adventist periodical *Ministry*, of October, 1981, p. 8 we note:

"The vast scope of subjects on which she wrote and the fact that she employs or comments on so large a portion of the verses in Scripture make it extremely difficult in practical life to avoid giving her a more important role than any Biblical author in the formation of doctrine. She simply had much more to say on all doctrinal topics than any other inspired writer. Thus if her writings are used to end all doctrinal disputes, it is almost impossible to maintain the Bible as the normative authority for doctrine . . . It is tempting in Ellen White's case to grant her more practical authority than any single Bible writer."

Indeed, in practical application, Ellen White settles all dispute for the Adventist Church. In a summer, 1982 publication by Adventist authority Morris L. Venden, published by Pacific Press, it is said:

"Fact #14. There is hope for every remnant believer today who sometimes feels confused at all the differing views taken by different scholars and commentaries. We have an inspired commentary that was given for the purpose of settling the disagreements among the uninspired commentaries. What do you do when the scholars disagree? Do you have to become a better scholar than the best in order to settle the disagreement in your own mind? No, let me repeat. God has given to our church an inspired commentary to settle the disagreements among the uninspired commentaries. And we can still be thankful for that today." *The Pillars*, p. 30.

This is in perfect keeping with the long ago statement by George Irwin that she is the "only infallible interpreter of Bible principles." She settles all doctrinal issues for the SDA Church, because she is the "inspired voice of God." Following is a series of quotations from a letter written by Ellen White in January, 1906 to Elder W. W. Simpson in San Diego. Note the date. This was after sixty years of writing. She says:

"The truths given us after the passing of the time in 1844 are just as certain and unchangeable as when the Lord gave them to us in answer to our urgent prayers. The visions that the Lord has given me are so remarkable that we know that what we have accepted is the truth. This was demonstrated by the Holy Spirit. Light, precious light from God, established the main points of our faith as we hold them today. . . . At that time one error after another pressed in upon us, and ministers and doctors brought in new doctrines. We would search the Scriptures with much prayer, and the Holy Spirit would bring the truth to our minds. Sometimes whole nights would be devoted to searching the Scriptures, and earnestly asking God for guidance. Companies of earnest, devoted men and women assembled for this purpose. The power of God would come upon me, and I was enabled clearly to define what is truth and what is error. As the points of our faith were thus established, our feet were placed upon a solid foundation. We accepted the truth point by point, under the demonstration of the Holy Spirit. I would be taken off in vision, and explanations would be given me. I was given illustrations of heavenly things and of the sanctuary, so that we were placed where light was shining on us in clear, distinct rays. *All these truths are immortalized in my writings.*

*The Lord never denies his word. Men may get up scheme after scheme, and the enemy will seek to seduce souls from the truth, but all who believe that the Lord has spoken through Sister White, and has given her a message, will be safe from the many delusions that will come in in these last days. . . . The positions taken in my books are truth. The truth was revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. . . . I am thankful that the instruction contained in my books establishes present truth for this time. These books were written under the demonstration of the Holy Spirit.'* Letter 50-1906, White Estate. (Emphasis added.)

No clearer statement could be made. Their doctrinal positions came by "visions" of Mrs. White and are "immortalized" in her writings. Her books "establish present truth for this time." Her "visions" were necessary to discern between truth and error, to determine just what the Scriptures taught. The *Adventist Review* statement of beliefs says — "We do not believe that Scripture can be understood only through the writings of Ellen White." Yet, she claimed that neither she nor any of the others of her time could understand the Scriptures, discern between truth and error, without her "visions." Following are two interesting statements by very prominent Adventists that emphasize this situation:

"[Mrs. White] seems to argue at points that . . . the visions constituted the final court of hermeneutical appeal. . . . The implications of this . . . are serious indeed. If the certainty of our doctrines rest on the visions given to Ellen White, if it is she who defines for us what is truth and what is error, if it is her books which establish present truth for this time, then there can be no doubt that Seventh-day Adventists are not Protestants." Ron Graybill, Ellen G. White Estate, in *Ellen White's Role In . . . Adventist History*, pp. 13-14.

"Do we use Ellen White in such a way as to give her control over the interpretation of Scripture in much the same way that the Catholics of Luther's day gave church tradition the right to interpret Scripture? The answer for most Adventists is yes, we do. . . . If we grant Ellen White hermeneutical control over the Scriptures we will blunt, perhaps destroy, our witness. We will be seen as a cult that makes the Bible say what we want it to say." Donald McAdams, President of Southwestern Union College, in *Response to . . . 'Ellen White's Role . . .'* pp. 3, 5.

Adventists understand very clearly the role Ellen White plays in the doctrinal position of their Church. Most certainly Ellen White *did argue* that she was the final appeal, and that her books established "present truth" for this time. In addition to that she even insisted on having her own way in procedural matters concerning the Church. In a letter of February 12, 1889, venting herself against those who would not follow her counsel, and especially some General Conference decisions that year, she says —

"Another resolution was passed that might have been laid upon the table, i.e. the one in reference to training all licentiates in the canvassing work before permitting them to enter the ministry. This was to be

an absolute rule, and notwithstanding all I had to say against this resolution, it was carried. It was not right for the conference to pass it. It was not in God's order, and this resolution *will fall powerless to the ground. I shall not sustain it*, for I would not be found working against God. This is not God's way of working and *I will not give it countenance for a moment.*" Letter 22-1889, White Estate (emphasis added).

She had to have her way about it, and her way was God's way. She set not only doctrinal positions but procedural ones as well. We next note that she said that Scripture is *misapplied* if it contradicts anything she wrote —

"It is eloquence for every one to keep silent in regard to the features of our faith in which they acted no part. God never contradicts Himself. Scripture proofs are misapplied if forced to testify to that which is not true. Another and still another will arise and bring in supposedly great light, and make their assertions. But we stand by the old landmarks." *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 162.

"God has given them light, and it is their privilege to cherish the light and to speak of it to strengthen and encourage one another. Brother J would confuse the mind by seeking to make it appear that the light God has given through the Testimonies is an addition to the word of God, but in this he presents the matter in a false light. God has seen fit in this manner to bring the minds of His people to His word, to give them a clearer understanding of it." *Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 246.

Of course she could insist that her testimonies were not "*an addition to the word of God*" because she believed her testimonies *were the word of God!* But notice that only what agrees with her writings is a true interpretation of Scripture. But, that's not all. Charles T. Russell, who started the movement that resulted in the Jehovah's Witnesses, insisted that after a person had studied his "*Studies in the Scriptures*," and then left them, they would shortly go into darkness because they had left the light of God's word. Ellen White made the same claim in just slightly different words. Note —

"I know your danger. If you lose confidence in the testimonies you will drift away from Bible truth." *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 98.

"It is Satan's plan to weaken the faith of God's people in the *Testimonies*. Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the *Testimonies*, which were once believed, are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived one will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction." *Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 211.

"The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. 'Where there is no vision, the people perish.' (Prov. 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony. He will bring in spurious visions to mislead, and will mingle the false with the true, and so disgust people



that they will regard everything that bears the name of visions as a species of fanaticism; but honest souls, by contrasting false and true, will be enabled to distinguish them . . . ." *Selected Messages*, Vol. 2, p. 78.

Notice how it is necessary to accept her writings in order to stay in the light. If one loses confidence in her writings he will drift away from Bible truth as well; there is no stopping with *just the Bible alone!* The statements clearly show her true feeling that one cannot take just the Bible alone and understand the will of God and serve Him faithfully. It is evident that Ellen White speaks for Adventists on all doctrinal issues. She is the final appeal in any disagreement between them; her statements settle the matter. That is how it worked when she was alive and it is still that way, though some changes may be on the horizon.

The *Adventist Review* statement further says, and keep in mind what we've covered so far in relation to it:

"We believe that the acceptance of the prophetic gift of Ellen White, while not a requirement for continuing church membership, is important to the nurture and unity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

That's not exactly so. Ellen White is the foundation of the Adventist Church and she permeates every thought, writing, and sermon. As a matter of fact, the latest copy of the official Certificate of Baptism that I have contains a list of *Baptismal Vows*, among which the candidate must believe and *sign his name to*:

"I accept the doctrine of spiritual gifts, and believe that the Spirit of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church."

The "Spirit of prophecy" is, of course, identifying Ellen White. On the inside of the Certificate is a *Summary of Doctrinal Beliefs*. No. 20 says:

"The church is to come behind in no gift, and the presence of the gift of the Spirit of prophecy is to be one of the identifying marks of the remnant church. . . . Seventh-day Adventists recognize that this gift was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White."

A candidate for baptism must believe in the inspiration of Ellen White, and sign his name to a vow concerning that belief. Note that they say "Seventh-day Adventists recognize . . ." So to *be an Adventist means that you recognize that Ellen White was an inspired prophetess*. Walter Rea, in his book, prints a letter that was sent out by one Adventist church to all its members. It says, in part:

"The Seventh-day Adventist church does not have a creed, but it does have a statement of beliefs that have been adopted as the basis for their existence. The statement of beliefs was reaffirmed at the recent General Conference (1980). More recently, the leaders and

scholars adopted a consensus statement which gave strong support to the official church position on teachings regarding the sanctuary and the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White. . . . To preserve unity and to maintain order, the Aurora church must ask that those in positions of leadership and teaching ministry subscribe to the fundamental beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists. If a teacher or leader cannot conscientiously do this at this time, we ask that they voluntarily resign from their office." *The White Lie*, p. 115.

Notice that one of the beliefs that is the "basis for the existence" of the Adventist Church is a belief in the prophetic ministry of Ellen White. That must be maintained and to be a member of that Church is to subscribe to that belief. They may say that the above statement only applies to leaders and teachers, but some sort of pressure is brought against any member not willing to toe the Ellen White line, and it would certainly bar them from any position of leadership. The question must be asked, naturally, that if an Adventist no longer can accept Ellen White's inspiration, *why would they want to remain an Adventist?* Reject her and you must reject the cardinal doctrines that make one a Seventh-day Adventist. As Nichol said: "the defense of our teachings, as found in our denominational works, is really a defense of Mrs. White, even as it is a defense of the doctrinal soundness of every other person who believes and promotes those beliefs." The doctrine and Ellen White stand or fall together. This is all precisely what many Adventists are awakening to. Remember, Ellen White said: "If you lose confidence in the testimonies you will drift away from the Bible truth." No, that isn't so. What they drift away from is Adventist doctrine as taught in the *Testimonies* and other writings of Ellen White. There is a difference between that and the Bible.

However, for the future, an irreversible trend has been set. As new evidence about Ellen White appears new adjustments must take place in Adventist explanations. Yet, enough evidence is continuing to come to light to affect profoundly the next generation of Adventists. This is clearly stated by Jonathan M. Butler, Professor of History of Religion at Loma Linda University, a leading Adventist school. An interview with Dr. Butler appears in *Sunstone*, May-June, 1982. Oddly enough, *Sunstone* is a Mormon publication. Butler says:

"Most people in the church try to explain her literary dependence by saying that she selected only the best material, that she edited the best possible anthology. Even this formulation has hardly passed the lips of church leadership when it appears obsolete in the face of new literary findings. She drew from historians in a historical argument, for example who were not the best among her contemporaries, who held errors of fact as well as in judgment. . . . I imagine Adventists by and large will survive these historical revelations with faith in

Mrs. White's inspiration intact, but it will have to be a *different* faith. My children will not grow up on the knee of the same Ellen White I did. She may be more of a grandmother to them than a mother. That is, she will retain an important and respected position in their spiritual heritage, but they will acknowledge, and be untroubled by, their historical distance from her. Already, I notice in the religion classes I teach that a professor cannot clinch an argument with a quotation from Ellen White. Now students want some corroborating evidence, a scientific or historical authority that backs up inspiration. Students are even willing to quarrel with the prophetess on occasion, or contrast her to scripture and favor scripture. This would have been unheard of a decade ago. . . . One difficulty for the teacher is meeting the needs of this new generation of students with the older generation eavesdropping on the conversation — members of the Board of Trustees, parents, local ministers whose belief in Ellen White's inspiration cannot work for their children. I think their children will still believe but only on their own terms." pp. 32-33.

In addition to notating the change in climate among younger Adventists, notice what Butler *admits*. He admits that (1) the usual, historical, practice would be to end all argument on a subject with a quotation from Ellen White. This the older generation, including Adventist leadership on all levels, continues to do, in spite of their denials. She is the final authority. (2) With Adventist leaders and parents, Scripture takes second place to Ellen White; Scripture is tested by her. The rising generation is not content with that. What this younger generation has not come yet to realize, accepting Butler's statement at face value, is that they cannot question Ellen White without abandoning her completely. She cannot remain even as a "grandmother." If she is wrong about her positions on doctrines and Scripture then she must also be wrong about her own "inspiration." It's as simple as that. Remember, as we have noted previously, Ellen White said: "God will accept of no partial obedience," and one must accept her writings as the voice of God or you are fighting against Him; there is no middle ground!

It should be clear that many things presently claimed by Adventist authorities are not completely truthful. They are in the midst of a tremendous publicity campaign to sell their line to the public and quiet the rebellion in their own membership. They continue to lose ground as new evidence appears.

## Chapter Three

### EVIDENCE FOR INSPIRATION AND HEALTH REFORM

In our previous chapters we have looked at the role of Ellen G. White as an "inspired prophetess." It is claimed that she was just as inspired as any writer of the Bible, or non-writing prophet as well. She insisted that Scripture is misapplied if it contradicts anything she wrote, which means that Scripture has to be tested by Ellen White.

Adventist apologists, almost exclusively, quote Ellen White to prove her own inspiration and authority. This approach is used especially in *The White Truth*, which is supposed to reply to criticisms as found in *The White Lie*, and is widely publicized by the Adventist authorities. But, that approach is no evidence at all. Letting her testify to her own veracity and authority is like letting a thief be the sole evidence, and own character witness, at his trial. That kind of evidence would prove Joseph Smith and other false prophets to be what they claimed.

Another favorite defense over the years has been one that is given in *Ministry*, August, 1982, p. 13. Under the heading of the question, "*What evidence is there of Ellen White's inspiration?*," they give a short column based on Matthew 7:16, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." They then proceed to present the "fruit" that is "evidence." They point to the Adventist people being stabilized and unified in understanding of prophecy and doctrinal positions: "through visions the Lord clarified what was truth and points out error." They also point to the people's understanding of the great conflict of the ages between Christ and Satan, seeing their place in the scheme of things. They point to a unified church in teachings and organization worldwide, with their medical and educational work, along with zealous missionary activities. They point to a happy people, hoping for salvation. But, when you look at what they say, it is all based on an acceptance of Ellen White's teachings and authority and so is not evidence of inspiration. A little different twist on their argument is given by the staff of the White Estate in an article "reviewing" Ronald Number's *Prophetess of Health*. They say:

"Why did people follow Ellen White? Why did people believe in her? How is it that she was so successful? True, her remarkable success is not, in and of itself, an evidence of providential guidance. After all, other American religious leaders, some of whom claimed direct divine inspiration, have been successful. But the fruits of a prophet's

labors should be one evidence of divine guidance. And, even in a purely historical sense a book that really portrayed the true image of Ellen White, a book that really attempts to 'understand' her, would need to explain the historical dynamics of her success . . . " *Spectrum*, Vol. 8, p. 12.

The only thing that "results of labor" indicates is that some people believed what they were told, and that may prove only the gullibility of people. Certainly the Adventists will not accept the success of Joseph Smith and his teachings in drawing a large number of satisfied followers. Nor will they do so in regard to any other such latter day "prophet." What we do see by the "fruits" of Ellen White is a deceived people thinking that the teachings of Ellen White came from God. Whatever moral standard she subscribed to that the Bible teaches is well and good, but is not limited to her teaching. When we look at all the "fruit" of Ellen White's work we find a false prophetess. Because people believed what they were told, and became active in making it work, being zealous for their beliefs, and thus feeling secure they were right is not evidence of her inspiration. There have been several attempts to answer criticisms of Ellen White, and to deal with some of her mistakes, but they fall far short of effectively defending her. What we want to look at is just *some* of the evidence that she *was not* inspired. Adventist Carlyle B. Haynes said:

"In all her numerous books, there is not one statement, one word, that is contrary to the uniform teaching of the Holy Scriptures." *The Gift of Prophecy*, p. 168.

In this statement, Haynes was only echoing what Ellen White said herself about her own writings:

"The Bible must be your counselor. Study it and the testimonies God has given; for they never contradict His word." *Selected Messages*, Vol. 3, p. 32.

"I am now looking over my diaries and copies of letters written for several years back. . . . While I am able to do this work, the people must have things to revive past history, that they may see that there is one straight chain of truth, without one heretical sentence, in that which I have written." *Ibid.*, p. 52.

As we shall see, with just a few pieces of evidence, these claims are simply not so. We will not go into a lengthy discussion at this time of the unscriptural nature of their "Sanctuary" and "Sabbath" teachings, though they would amply illustrate a lack of inspiration on Ellen White's part. We will look at some other subjects not ordinarily dealt with that show contradictions between Ellen White and Scripture, some things showing additions to Scripture, some showing contradictions with herself, and some

things that are just plain silly.

Most people are aware that Adventists, for the most part, are vegetarians. This practice, along with a general health emphasis, was instilled in them by Ellen White. She made health reform rules a matter of salvation, claiming light from God on the subject. She said:

"At the time the light of health reform dawned upon us, and since that time, the questions have come home every day, 'Am I practicing true temperance in all things?' 'Is my diet such as will bring me in a position where I can accomplish the greatest amount of good?' If we cannot answer these questions in the affirmative, we stand condemned before God, for He will hold us all responsible for the light which has shone upon our path." *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 19-20.

"The light God has given on health reform is for our salvation and the salvation of the world." *Ibid.*, p. 461.

"The sanitariums which are established are to be closely and inseparably bound up with the gospel. The Lord has given instruction that the gospel be carried forward; and the gospel includes health reform in all its phases. . . . The gospel of health is to be firmly linked with the ministry of the word. It is the Lord's design that the restoring influence of health reform shall be a part of the last great effort to proclaim the gospel message." *Ibid.*, p. 75.

"God demands that appetites be cleansed, and that self-denial be practiced in regard to those things which are not good. This is a work that will have to be done before His people can stand before Him a perfected people." *Ibid.*, p. 36.

These quotations are but a small sample of what we find in her writings along the same lines. Some of her apologists try to soften this by saying she was only offering *advice* on health matters. Not so. She claimed it came from God and the people were under obligation to obey it; it was a matter of salvation, bound up in the gospel, and necessary to perfection before God. Too, this was not just a matter of instruction to take care of one's body, it was her whole range of "health reform" regulations that she insisted was necessary. This is even more clearly seen in a letter to her son Edson while he was away in school in 1868. Note the guilt she heaped upon him for eating some nuts and candy between meals:

"I have frequently asked myself what could you have done with so much money. Edson, I am answered in a dream, you are not a health reformer in principle. You do not live up to the light God has given and while you neglect one ray of light that the Lord has graciously permitted to shine upon your pathway, you will be in darkness. When you boarded yourself, did not you spend money for nuts, candies and hurtful things and eat these between meals and at any time? I concluded that your frequent headaches were caused by the indulgence of your appetite. . . . If you take a course which brings debility, beclouds the sensitive nerves of the brain, you cannot render to God perfect service. You cannot glorify Him on earth. . . . Conformity to

the world can never bring this desired knowledge; to be transformed is the condition of obtaining this blessing. . . . Edson, God is a searcher of the heart. All our purposes and motives are revealed and naked to the gaze of heavenly angels and His own sight. Every departure from the light He has given is recorded and these deviations will hinder the growth in grace and heavenly knowledge, will prevent being partakers of the divine nature, not have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Letter 5-1868.

Most of her health reform ideas were developed over a period of time. Certainly coffee, tea, tobacco, and alcohol were proscribed. But, high on her list of banned articles was the flesh of animals, meat. Here's what she says:

"Again and again I have been shown that God is trying to lead us back, step by step, to His original design, — that man should subsist upon the natural products of the earth. . . . Vegetables, fruits and grains should compose our diet. Not an ounce of flesh foods should enter our stomachs. The eating of flesh is unnatural. We are to return to God's original purpose in the creation of man. . . . Is it not time that all should aim to dispense with flesh foods? How can those who are seeking to become pure, refined, and holy, that they may have the companionship of heavenly angels, continue to use as food anything that has so harmful an effect on soul and body? How can they take the life of God's creatures that they may consume the flesh as a luxury?" *Counsels on Diet and Food*, p. 380.

One can see again from this that abstaining from meat is necessary to true holiness and "companionship of heavenly angels." Among the terrible things about meat eating, she tells us, are both physical and spiritual depravity of every kind. In the early days of health reform she emphasized the effect of meat eating on the passions and depravity that resulted. In the later years the emphasis was on the diseases that were caused by eating animals that were themselves diseased. Here is a range of her comments:

"A meat diet changes the disposition and strengthens animalism. We are composed of what we eat, and eating much flesh will diminish intellectual activity. Students would accomplish much more in their studies if they never tasted meat. When the animal part of the human agent is strengthened by meat eating, the intellectual powers diminish proportionately. A religious life can be more successfully gained and maintained if meat is discarded, for this diet stimulates into intense activity lustful propensities, and enfeebles the moral and spiritual nature. 'The flesh warreth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.' . . . Cancers, tumors, and all inflammatory diseases are largely caused by meat eating. From the light God has given me, the prevalence of cancer and tumors is largely due to gross living on dead flesh. . . . The meat diet is the serious question. Shall human beings live on the flesh of dead animals? The answer, from the light that God has given is, No, decidedly No. . . . Physicians . . . should point out the increase of disease in the animal kingdom. The testimony

of examiners is that very few animals are free from disease, and that the practice of eating largely of meat is contracting diseases of all kinds, — cancers, tumors, scrofula, tuberculosis, and numbers of other like affections." *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 388.

You will notice every possible scare tactic is used to frighten people away from meats. While it is true that we can contract some diseases from meat, especially if care is not taken with proper handling, the same can be said about fruits and vegetables as well. The *range* of diseases that she attributes to meat eating cannot be substantiated however. Nor can it be shown that eating meat causes the spiritual and intellectual depravity she describes. Notice also in passing how she describes what she says in the terminology of the fraudulent "science" of Phrenology. This is also seen in the next quote from the same book, p. 390. Notice that she claims that by eating the dead animal that we partake of its nature, an idea without any basis in fact:

"Your family have partaken largely of flesh meats, and the animal propensities have been strengthened, while the intellectual have been weakened. We are composed of what we eat, and if we subsist largely upon the flesh of dead animals, we shall partake of their nature. You have encouraged the grosser part of your organization, while the more refined has been weakened."

These quotations should suffice to show the teachings of Ellen White on the subject of flesh foods. We find her in contradiction to Scripture, however. In I Timothy 4:1-5 we read:

"But, the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons . . . commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer."

Francis Nichol tries to get her out of this contradiction by saying this passage is talking about the characteristics of Gnostic heresies and so doesn't apply to the Adventists. Certainly, all characteristics of Gnostic apostasy would not apply, but this particular one does. Why would Paul condemn the apostasy of commanding to abstain from meats if God insisted that Christians abstain from meats? That particular item would not be falling away from the faith because the Faith would require such abstinence. James White, husband of Ellen White, argued that the word "meats" here just meant "food" and so would not refer to flesh foods. However, the term, though translated "food" in places, is also used to specifically refer to flesh animals. In Hebrews 9:10 and 13:9-10 the same word is used to refer to the animal sacrifices. It is also found to mean flesh in I Corinthians



8:8-13, which we will note more about in a moment. Further, what are we to say about Jesus feeding the multitudes the loaves and *fishes*? Or, we read that Jesus desired to eat the last Passover Supper with his disciples, which included lamb as the centerpiece of the meal. Also, after His resurrection Jesus met His disciples and ate a piece of fish. Adventists like to point to Jesus going into the Synagogue on the "Sabbath" as evidence that He kept the Sabbath. Well, why wouldn't His eating and serving flesh be a like example and authority for our doing the same? The Adventists are inconsistent on the point. Then notice in I Timothy 4:4-5, as quoted above: "For every creature of God is good . . . received with thanksgiving . . . it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer." That language follows the statement on *meats*. This one passage counters the position insisted on by Ellen White.

The only instruction in the New Testament that deals with *not* eating flesh foods has to do with expediency; primarily meats that had been offered in sacrifice to idols. In I Corinthians 8 this subject is discussed. In verse 13 Paul says: "Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble." The context shows in what way the brother would likely stumble, follow after idols. Notice also that the word *meat*, the same word as in I Timothy 4, is identified as referring to *flesh*. In Romans 14 the relationship of vegetarian versus those who eat meat is presented. Verse 2 says: "One man hath faith to eat all things: but he that is weak eateth herbs." The term *herbs* refers to vegetable and other plant foods. The context of the chapter points out that both are acceptable to God: whether one is a vegetarian or not does not matter. In the latter part of the chapter he returns to what might cause another to stumble, and only in that context, of meat that has been offered in sacrifice to idols, is meat eating frowned on. Ellen White does not make her case. Let's notice a few other things she said:

"Let not any of our ministers set an evil example in the eating of flesh meat. Let them and their families live up to the light of health reform." *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 399.

But what are we to say of Jesus and His disciples eating the Passover, or Jesus eating the fish before His ascension, or the feeding of the thousands with the loaves and fishes? Note the next quotation from Ellen White and compare it with the one following from what Jesus told His disciples:

"Why, then, do men continue to choose flesh meats? Can we possibly have confidence in ministers who at tables where flesh is served

join with others in eating it?" *Ibid.*, p. 402.

"Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come. . . . And in that same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you." Luke 10:1, 7-8.

Ellen White made rules where the Lord didn't. Yet another way in which she misused Scripture is found in the following example:

"When the God of Israel brought His people out of Egypt, He withheld flesh meats from them in a great measure, but gave them bread from heaven, and water from the flinty rock. With this they were not satisfied. . . . God granted their desire, giving them flesh and leaving them to eat till their gluttony produced a plague, from which many of them died." *Counsels on Diet and Food*, p. 148.

When we compare this with the original reference in Numbers 11:33, however, we see something entirely different. It wasn't "gluttony" in which they ate their fill and thereby produced a plague. The Lord smote them *before they had even chewed the flesh!* Note:

"And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague." Numbers 11:33.

The next quotation places her in contradiction with Scripture again.

"Disease is contracted by the use of meat. The diseased flesh of these dead carcasses is sold in the market places, and disease among men is the sure result. The Lord would bring His people into a position where they will not touch the flesh of dead animals." *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 411.

"Whatsoever is sold in the shambles (meat-market), eat, asking no questions for conscience' sake; for the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." I Corinthians 10:25-26.

I'm sure the sanitary conditions were no better in the first century than in the days of Ellen White. Animals had diseases in the first century also. Why do we not find any protestations against meat eating in the New Testament because it "inflamed animal passions," or because of the probability of disease from eating it? To the contrary, we find eating meat fully acceptable, except when it left wrong impressions due to sacrifice to idols, or, in some circumstances when certain meats caused problems with Jewish prospects.

Notice now some contradictory teaching and practice of Ellen

White. In *Testimonies*, Vol. 2, page 68 she says that "cheese should never be introduced into the stomach." On page 362 she says:

"You place upon your tables butter, eggs, and meat, and your children partake of them. They are fed with the very things that will excite their passions, and then you come to meeting and ask God to bless and save your children. How high do your prayers go?"

Here she classes butter and eggs along with meat as substances that *excite their passions*. Ronald Numbers, in his book *Prophetess of Health*, pages 170-175 details documents showing changes in her views of certain foods over the years. On page 175 he reports, first quoting from her in 1872:

"We bear positive testimony against tobacco, spiritous liquors, snuff, tea, coffee, flesh-meats, butter, spices, rich cakes, mince pies, a large amount of salt, and all exciting substances used as articles of food."

Here butter and meat are classed with other substances that "excite." Since she refers to "all exciting substances used as articles of food" that are not listed, we would have to include eggs in the list seeing what she said in the previous quote given above. Yet, nine years later "inspiration" made some changes:

"Tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcohol we must present as sinful indulgences. We cannot place on the same ground, meat, eggs, butter, cheese and such articles placed upon the table."

Here a separation between articles is found, with more to come. By 1902 she was saying:

"Milk, eggs, and butter should not be classed with flesh-meat. In some cases the use of eggs is beneficial."

Does she mean that at times it is beneficial to "inflamm animal passions?" Numbers further points out that by 1909 she was recommending the use of "eggs, butter, and milk to prevent malnutrition." What a change! Adventist apologists try to defend this change, in such things as butter, as being due to "bad" butter being so prevalent in the earlier days of her teachings. Disease was spread by eating butter. However, that was not the ground on which she denounced butter. And what of eggs? Diseased eggs? But notice now what she claims for herself:

"I have not changed my course a particle since I adopted the health reform. I have not taken one step back since the light from heaven upon this subject first shone upon my pathway. I broke away from everything at once, — from meat and butter, and from three meals. . . . I left off those things from principle. I took my stand on health reform from principle. And since that time, brethren, you have not

heard me advance an extreme view of health reform that I have had to take back. I have advanced nothing but what I stand to today." *Testimonies*, Vol. 2, pp. 371-372, (1869).

Well, she did change her course, in teaching and practice. In 1909 she claimed the following:

"It is reported by some that I have not followed the principles of health reform as I have advocated them with my pen; but I can say that I have been a faithful health reformer. Those who have been members of my family know that this is true." *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 159.

Well, let's see what her family knows. In 1935, Arthur L. White, her grandson, wrote a letter to a Miss Anna Frazier. In it he quoted from a letter of W. C. (Willie) White of a few months earlier. He said:

"Regarding Sister White's use of meat, I am very familiar with her practices and teachings. The instruction given to her in 1863 pointing out the disadvantage and the dangers of a meat diet, came as a great surprise to her and her abandonment of meat was a gradual process. At the end of three or four years meat was almost never seen on her table, but for a time there was a meat soup served about once a week. Sister White and her family worked steadily away from the use of meat, but we had many set-backs. . . . We were many years vegetarians before the conviction settled upon us that we should be teetotalers. Therefore, from time to time in her journeyings from place to place, our lunch basket contained some chicken, or turkey or tinned tongue . . ." *Letter from Arthur L. White to Anna Frazier*, December 18, 1935.

First, he claims that Ellen White phased out meat over the first four years after 1863. Secondly, that there were several times that chicken, turkey, or tinned tongue was consumed. The fact is that it was 1896 before she finally did away with meat altogether. In 1882 she evidences her fondness for herring and oysters. In a letter to her daughter-in-law, Mary Kelsey White, wife of her son Willie, she says:

"Mary, if you can get me a good box of herrings — fresh ones — please do so. These last ones that Willie got are bitter and old. If you can buy cans, say (a) half dozen cans of good tomatoes, please do so. We shall need them. If you can get a few cans of good oysters, get them." *Letter 16, 1882, dated May 31, 1882, from Healdsburg, California.*

We ask at this point, that when she claimed she had followed exactly the teachings on health that she advocated, and that her family knew it was so, why do we find her family knowing otherwise? Arthur L. White, in the letter to Anna Frazier, said "When it comes to the matter of the use of oysters, we are inclined to believe that the rumor has no foundation whatsoever in fact." Yet, Mrs. White herself testifies to it being so!

Ellen White tries to soften the common reports of her practice

with statements as the following:

"It has come to be a very serious question whether it is safe to use flesh-foods at all in this age of the world. It would be better never to eat meat than to use the flesh of animals that are not healthy. When I could not obtain the food I needed, I have sometimes eaten a little meat; but I am becoming more and more afraid of it." *Christian Temperance*, p. 118.

Francis D. Nichol, in his book *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, page 386, attempts to resolve this admission with other denials of departure from health reform, but fails to do so. Her practice was not in keeping with her teaching. Further, on pages 388-389, Nichol quotes a letter of Ellen White's wherein she admits to having both meat and cheese on her table. Remember, she said that "cheese should never be introduced into the stomach." Emphasis in the following is mine:

"I have a large family, which often numbers sixteen. In it there are men who work at the plough, and who fell trees. These have most vigorous exercise, but not a particle of the flesh of animals is placed on our table. Meat has not been used by us *since the Brighton (Australia) Campmeeting (January, 1894)*. It was not my purpose to have it on my table at any time, but urgent pleas were made that such a one was unable to eat this or that, and that his stomach could take care of meat better than it could anything else. *Thus I was enticed to place it on my table. The use of cheese also began to creep in, because some like cheese*; but I soon controlled that. But when the selfishness of taking the lives of animals to gratify a perverted taste was presented to me by a Catholic woman, kneeling at my feet, I felt ashamed and distressed. I saw it in a new light, and I said, *I will no longer patronize the butchers.*"

That was in 1896. Adventists today extol the greatness of Ellen White's instructions on health reform; they insist the instructions came from God by their "inspired prophetess." However, everything she wrote about had already been pushed by health reformers long before she ever came along. Indeed, much of what she wrote on the subject was copied from the books of these reformers, and without giving due credit.

What we have seen in this chapter alone is that Ellen White was not inspired in what she said, that she contradicted the Bible, and herself as well. We will continue this line of reasoning in the next chapter.

## Chapter Four

### CONTRADICTIONS AND FOOLISHNESS

We have seen how Ellen White contradicts both Scripture and herself and will show that even more so. Let's begin with a statement from the Publisher's *Preface* to her book, *Sketches from the Life of Paul*:

"The writer of this book, having received especial help from the Spirit of God, is able to throw light upon the teachings of Paul and their application to our own time, as no other authors are prepared to do. She has not suffered herself to be drawn aside to discuss theories, or to indulge in speculation. No extraneous matter is introduced. Consequently much that is contained in other books, which is interesting to the curious, and has a certain value, but which is after all little more than theory, finds no place in this work."

One has but to read the book to see the nonsense of that statement. It is especially ludicrous in view of Ellen White's extensive borrowing from others, which we will look at in the next chapter. Ellen White was quite prone to speculation, theories, and curious renderings. Let's look at a few of these:

"As Adam came forth from the hand of his Creator, he was of noble height, and of beautiful symmetry. He was more than twice as tall as men now living upon the earth, and was well proportioned. His features were perfect and beautiful. His complexion was neither white, nor sallow, but ruddy, glowing with the rich tint of health. Eve was not quite as tall as Adam. Her head reached a little above his shoulders. She, too was noble — perfect in symmetry, and very beautiful." *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 3, p. 34.

This sounds like Joseph Smith's description of the inhabitants of the Moon. It also is very much like Smith's rewriting of the Bible, the "inspired translation." You will notice how she adds to the Bible text. Nothing of that sort is found in Scriptures. But, they claim that since she was inspired she saw things not revealed in the Scriptures. But, what does that do to their claim that she did not *add* to the Bible? There's more:

"Angels of God visited Adam and Eve, and told them of the fall of Satan, and warned them to be on their guard. They cautioned them not to separate from each other in their employment, for they might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. If one of them were alone, they would be in greater danger than if both were together." *Ibid.*, p. 39.

Of course, there is nothing in the Scriptures to even hint at anything like this. It is pure speculation. But, there's more:

"Eve wandered away from the side of her husband, and was gazing with mingled curiosity and admiration upon the fruit of the forbidden tree. Satan, in the form of a serpent, conversed with Eve. The serpent had not the power of speech, but Satan used him as a medium. It was Satan that spoke, not the serpent. Eve was deceived, and thought it was the serpent. This serpent was a very beautiful creature with wings; and while flying through the air his appearance was very bright, resembling the color of burnished gold. He did not go upon the ground, but went from place to place through the air, and ate fruit like man." *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

All of this is speculative, curious, theorizing, imaginative, but not according to Scripture. In fact Genesis 3:6 says — "... she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." *It does not say* she "wandered away from the side of her husband," but rather that he was "with her." On page 42 of the same book she says:

"I saw a sadness come over the countenance of Adam. He appeared afraid and astonished. A struggle appeared to be going on in his mind. He told Eve he was quite certain that this was the foe that they had been warned against. If so, that she must die. She assured him she felt no ill affects, but rather a very pleasant influence, and entreated him to eat. Adam regretted that Eve had left his side, but now the deed was done. He must be separated from her whose society he had loved so well. How could he have it thus. His love for Eve was strong. And in utter discouragement he resolved to share her fate. He seized the fruit and quickly ate it, and like Eve felt not immediately its ill effects. Adam disobeyed and fell."

More speculation, of course. Now notice how she put the same circumstances later in the 1887 edition of *Great Controversy*, p. 352:

"Eve yielded to temptation, and through her influence Adam also was deceived. They accepted the words of the serpent, that God did not mean what he said; they distrusted their Creator, and imagined that he was restricting their liberty, and that they might obtain great light and freedom by transgressing his law."

Here Ellen White has both guilty of being deceived and rebelling against God. But in 1864, in the preceding quotation, Adam was completely aware of what he was doing, and the consequences, and yet ate out of love for Eve, fearing he would lose her if he didn't. Here's another statement from her:

"The news of man's fall spread through heaven — every harp was hushed. The angels cast their crowns from their heads in sorrow. All Heaven was in agitation. The angels were grieved at the base ingratitude of man, in return for the rich bounties God had provided. A council was held to decide what must be done with the guilty pair. The angels feared that they would put forth the hand, and eat of the tree of life, and thus perpetuate a life of sin." *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 3, p. 44.

One has only to compare this with the account in Genesis to see that not only nothing happened as she described it, but it contradicts the statements concerning the Godhead in action in those passages. In the Preface of Volume I of *Spiritual Gifts* dated 1858, Ellen White says: "*Yet no man has a right to alter the word of God . . . Prophecyings which contradict the plain and positive declarations of the word are to be rejected.*" Yet, we find her contradicting and adding to that Bible.

A more serious contradiction appears in Ellen White's teachings in relation to the fall of man. In 1858 she said, writing on "The Plan of Salvation":

"Sorrow filled heaven, as it was realized that man was lost, and the world that God created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness and death, and there was no way of escape for the offender. The whole family of Adam must die. I saw the lovely Jesus, and beheld an expression of sympathy and sorrow upon his countenance. Soon I saw him approach the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father. The anxiety of the angels seemed to be intense while Jesus was communing with his Father. Three times he was shut in by the glorious light about the Father, and the third time he came from the Father, his person could be seen. His countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and trouble, and shone with benevolence and loveliness, such as words cannot express. He then made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. He told them that he had been pleading with his Father, and had offered to give his life a ransom, and take the sentence of death upon himself, and through him man might find pardon. . . . Jesus bid the heavenly host be reconciled to the plan that his Father accepted. . . . Said the angel, Think ye that the Father yielded up his dearly beloved Son without a struggle? No, No. It was even a struggle with the God of heaven, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give his beloved Son to die for them." *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 22, 25, 26.

You see, among other things, the position clearly stated that *after* Adam and Eve sinned that a plan had to be formulated to save man from sin. Jesus is pictured as originating the plan and then having to go three times to the Father and talk Him into it! And, the Father found it difficult to decide on whether to let guilty man perish or allow His Son to die for man. In addition, one might note the misconceptions concerning the Godhead. Not only is none of this found in Scripture, but is *contrary to what is taught there*. But, compare this quotation of 1858 with the next one from 1898. We get an entirely different story:

"The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. . . . God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world that he covenanted to give His only-begotten Son . . . " *Desire of the Ages*, 1956 printing, pp. 3-4.



"Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped their hands in solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the Human race." *Ibid.*, p. 824.

Here the plan was formulated *before* the world was formed, and the Father is pictured *taking a different part* in that plan than in the previous position. First it's one way and then the other, and all supposed to be by inspiration of God! But, while we are on some things from *Desire of the Ages*, let's notice another item or two:

"All this displeased His brothers. Being older than Jesus, they felt that He should be under their dictation. They charged Him with thinking Himself superior to them, and reproved Him for setting Himself above their teachers and the priests and rulers of the people. Often they threatened and tried to intimidate Him; but He passed on, making the Scriptures His guide." p. 62.

"His brothers, as the sons of Joseph were called, sided with the rabbis. They insisted that the traditions must be heeded, as if they were the requirements of God . . ." p. 61.

Again, comparison with the Bible text shows what additions to it she makes here. I presume she is contending that Joseph was married to someone else before Mary and had several male children by that marriage. What was that claim again about her not "theorizing?"

In the next quotation please note that there is only *one* Herod spoken of; the nouns and pronouns all indicate this:

"Herod's heart grew still harder, and when he learned that Jesus had arisen, he was not much troubled. He took the life of James; and when he saw that this pleased the Jews, he took Peter also, intending to put him to death. But God had a work for Peter to do, and sent his angel and delivered him. Herod was visited with judgment. God smote him in the sight of a great multitude as he was exalting himself before them, and he died a horrible death." *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 71.

It was Herod Antipas who had a part in the trial of Jesus but Herod Agrippa I who put James to death, imprisoned Peter, and was struck down by God. Adventist apologists have tried to cover up this historical blunder by saying that Ellen White was talking about the same "evil spirit" that was in all of the Herods, so that their wicked acts were as though there was but one person. But that isn't what she says; that's just a flimsy coverup.

The role of Satan, not only in Genesis, but in other places in history as well, receives center stage with Ellen White. The following statement concerning the temptation of Jesus is interesting:

"Satan hoped to conquer him through this powerful medium, and

laid his plans accordingly. As soon as Christ's long fast commenced, he was at hand with his temptations. He came clothed in light, claiming to be an angel sent from the throne of God to sympathize with Christ and relieve him from his suffering condition. He represented to him that God did not desire him to pass through the pain and self-denial which he had anticipated. He claimed to bear the message from Heaven that God only designed to prove the willingness of Christ to endure his test. Satan told him that he was to set his feet in the blood-stained path, but not to travel it, that, like Abraham, he was tried to show his perfect obedience. He claimed to be the angel who stayed the hand of Abraham, as the knife was raised to slay Isaac, and that he had now come to save the life of the Son of God, deliver him from a painful death by starvation, and assist him in the plan of salvation." *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 2, p. 90.

"As soon as Christ began his fast, Satan appeared as an angel of light, and claimed to be a messenger of heaven. He told him it was not the will of God that he should suffer this pain and self-denial." *Christ Our Saviour*, p. 45.

When we take all this nonsense and compare it with the Bible account of the temptation of Jesus we find something quite different. Ellen White not only adds to the Bible, she contradicts it:

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered. And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." Matthew 4:1-3.

The Bible presents Satan coming to tempt Jesus *after* the forty days of fasting, whereas Ellen White has him appearing at the beginning of that time. It will also be seen in Matthew 4 that the approach of Satan is nothing at all like she describes it. But, the additions of Ellen White are revered by Adventists as the voice of God. In fact, if you could listen in on some of their conversations you would find, in nine out of ten, a common statement cropping up. It may vary slightly but is essentially as the following: "The Bible is so hard to understand. Thank God for Sister White because she makes it so plain." Indeed, Adventists more often than not will use *Great Controversy* or *Desire of the Ages*, or some like work of Ellen White's in their devotionals. It is like the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, or Christian Scientists, for it is not what the Bible teaches but rather what their "inspired" leaders say it teaches. Their primary study is not the Bible, but their "inspired" leader's comments on the Bible.

In 1849, at the close of a broadside that contained several instructions from her "visions," Ellen White said:

"If any among us are sick, let us not dishonor God by applying to earthly physicians, but apply to the God of Israel. If we follow his di-

rections (James 5:14-15), the sick will be healed. God's promise cannot fail. Have faith in God, and trust wholly in him . . ." January 31, 1849.

Some followed this instruction with unwelcome results and later she had to change this position. This statement was deleted from future publications, even though most of her writings were printed in a single volume in 1851 as her "Experiences and Views." Several years later Ellen White was accused of having caused the death of an Adventist woman who refused medical help. Ellen White protested her innocence by pointing out, first, that she was over a hundred miles away at the time, and had not learned of the illness until after the death. Secondly, she claimed that she received a vision, ("I was shown"), that those involved had been lacking in judgment in giving their influence against her getting medical aid. "I saw that they had carried matters to extremes, and that the cause of God was wounded and our faith reproached, on account of such things, which were fanatical in the extreme." She goes on to say:

"We believe in the prayer of faith; but some have carried this matter too far, especially those who have been affected with fanaticism. Some have taken the strong ground that it was wrong to use simple remedies. We have never taken this position, but have opposed it. We believe it to be perfectly right to use the remedies God has placed in our reach, and if these fail, apply to the great Physician, and in some cases the counsel of an earthly physician is very necessary. This position we have always held." *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 2, pp. 134-135.

When you compare this statement with the one from the 1849 Broadside you find quite a change in positions. For her to claim she has "always held" the position of obtaining help from an "earthly physician" when needed is simply not so. Yet, this is the "inspired prophetess" of God. It is also strange that she was so "down" on the medical profession at the beginning, and went on to establish a basis for the Adventist medical schools.

One of the most outlandish and nonsensical positions taken by the "Spirit of Prophecy" was in regard to the origins of some races of man. In the quotations the word *amalgamation* refers to sexual intercourse and its results. Here's what she says concerning conditions before and following the Flood:

"But if there was one sin above another which called for the destruction of the race by the flood, it was the base crime of amalgamation of man and beast which defaced the image of God, and caused confusion everywhere. . . . Every species of animal which God had created were preserved in the ark. The confused species which God did not create, which were the result of amalgamation, were destroyed by the flood. Since the flood there has been amalgamation of man and beast, as may be seen in the almost endless varieties of species of animals, and in certain races of men." *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 3, pp. 64, 75 (1864).

That is quite unbelievable, and certainly not believed by Adventists today. The statements were later dropped from any publication, but from the beginning caused a stir. Modern Adventists have reinterpreted the statements to explain away what she said. (A discussion of the controversy leading to that change is found in *Spectrum*, Vol. 12, No. 4, June, 1982, pp. 10-17). In 1868 Uriah Smith, editor of the *Review and Herald* at the time, wrote a defense of the visions of Ellen White. This was printed in booklet form that same year under the title *The Visions of Mrs. E. G. White*. It was very warmly praised by James White in the *Review and Herald* on August 25, 1868, and he and Ellen took 2000 copies to campmeetings that year. Smith took the position on these amalgamation statements as referring to sexual relations between men and animals that produced different races of man. That was his defense of Mrs. White on the point. Smith says, after quoting what we noted in the reference above:

"But does any one deny the general statement contained in the extract given above? They do not. If they did, they could easily be silenced by a reference to such cases as the wild Bushmen of Africa, some tribes of the Hottentots, and perhaps the Digger Indians of our own country, etc. Moreover, naturalists affirm that the line of demarkation between the human and animal races is lost in confusion. It is impossible, as they affirm, to tell just where the human ends and the animal begins. Can we suppose that this was so ordained of God in the beginning? Rather has not sin marred the boundaries of these two kingdoms?" *The Visions of Mrs. E. G. White*, p. 103.

Obviously Smith, and most Adventists for many years, believed just what Ellen White plainly said. And with the endorsement of James White it is evident that she did say it.

Another interesting position taken was that acquired conditions or characteristics could be passed on to one's children in various ways. Ellen White was especially opposed to tight-laced corsets for women. She gives her endorsement to the following:

"But my waist is naturally slender," says one woman. She means that she has inherited small lungs. Her ancestors, more or less of them, compressed their lungs in the same way that we do, and it has become in her case a congenital deformity. This leads us to one of the worst aspects in the whole matter — the transmitted results of indulgence in their deadly vice." *Health Reformer*, Vol. 6, No. 5, 1871, p. 157.

It should be apparent that such practices on the part of ancestors is not inherited. It is the same basic position of evolutionists as to how evolution operates. The next quotation has to do with the use of wet-nurses for one's babies:

"A stranger performs the duties of the mother and gives from her breast the food to sustain life. Nor is this all. She also imparts her

## Chapter Five

### PLAGIARISM: STEALING FROM OTHERS

One of the biggest controversies among Adventists presently concerns Ellen White's literary borrowing. The Adventist authorities and apologists have been scrambling to explain what she did. More and more evidence has been coming to light as to the extent of her borrowing. She would not only borrow paragraphs and whole pages from other authors, but would paraphrase from them and follow the same order of composition in producing her own works. This is true of her letters, sermons, diaries, articles, books, and even her "visions." These facts were known to a limited extent in the early days of the movement. There was some trouble over it then. There were several prominent Adventists that "fell away" because of their loss of faith in Ellen White. Ronald Numbers, in his book *Prophetess of Health*, touched off the modern explosion with revelations of her dependence on the health reformers of her day. The second shock, and the most serious, has been the work of Walter Rea. During his thirty-three years as an Adventist Minister, Rea had probably put in more time and effort in studying Ellen White's writings, and publishing the fruit of such labors, than any other Adventist ever had. Here is a case where deep familiarity with her works brought a loss of faith in her inspiration; his familiarity with her led him to recognize the extent of her borrowing. His book, *The White Lie*, gives ample details, and a second book is in process on the subject.

The extent of her borrowing is more and more coming to light. For many years the Adventist authorities dismissed the subject as of no consequence. They insisted that the borrowing amounted to nothing more than a few simple historical facts, and perhaps a word or two here and there. Walter Rea has challenged them to find even 20% of her work that was strictly original. And the evidence keeps mounting.

This charge, of "plagiarism," has been made against her since the last century. The Adventists have denied she did any such thing. The current dictionary defines "*plagiarism*" as: "*copying, or imitating the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author and passing off the same as one's original work.*" Even in the last century, when she was so actively taking from other works, Webster defined the word as: "*the act of purloining another man's literary works, or introducing passages from another*

man's writings and putting them off as one's own." Ellen White did just that! She never gave credit, nor used quotation marks, until the criticism made her practice so public that something had to be done. Even then it was at the end of her life that quotation marks were used in *some* of the borrowed passages. Even then a section set off with quotation marks will be followed by an equally borrowed section left untouched. And then there were the paraphrases, slight changes of wording, or borrowed sequence of events that were likewise lifted from others but without notice made of where they came from. In an article in the *Adventist Review* of September 17, 1981, the Adventist powers printed an interview with a Washington copyright lawyer, who was not an Adventist himself, they said. The lawyer stated that Ellen White was not a plagiarist, *legally*. What they deal with is the absence, or paucity, of copyright laws of her day; he insisted she did not violate any law. However, that is completely beside the point, having no bearing on the issue. The dictionary definition tags her as a plagiarist. She took "passages from another man's writings and put them off as her own." Actually, she took *a lot of passages* from others.

Uriah Smith, editor of the *Review and Herald* at the time, and James White, President of the company, were certainly aware of what the word "plagiarism" meant. They also knew of the immorality of such a practice. In a short editorial piece on September 6, 1864, the following appeared:

"Plagiarism — this word is a word that is used to signify 'literary theft' or the taking of the productions of another and passing them off as one's own. . . . In the *World's Crisis* of August 23, 1864, we find a piece of poetry, duly headed, 'For the World's Crisis,' and signed 'Luthera B. Weaver.' What was our surprise, therefore, to find this piece our familiar hymn,

'Long upon the mountain weary  
Have the scattered flock been torn.'

This piece was written by Annie R. Smith, and was first published in the *Review*, Vol. iii, No. 8, December 9, 1851, and has been in our hymn book ever since the first edition thereafter issued. But worst of all the piece is mutilated, the second and most significant verse being suppressed. . . . But perhaps this would too clearly have revealed its origin, as scarcely any class of people at the present day, except Seventh-day Adventists, have anything to say about ALL the commandments of God. We are perfectly willing that pieces from the *Review*, or any of our books should be published to any extent, and all we ask is, that simple justice be done us, by due credit being given."

Of course, it seemed to be alright for Ellen White to do it, but they didn't want anyone else doing it to them. We must conclude from even her own husband that Ellen White did not practice simple justice but rather "literary theft." Further, according

to her son, Willie, she knew what was proper and insisted on due credit being given when it came to quoting her. Willie said:

"Mother instructs me to say to you that you may be free to select from her writings short articles . . . in each case giving the proper credit." Letter of W. C. White to Dr. David Paulson, February 15, 1905.

But, plagiarism seemed to run in the family. James White himself did not hesitate to plagiarize and thus comes under his own condemnation. Later Ellen copied from *him* and formed a basis for her own book *The Great Controversy*. Walter Rea comments on this thusly:

"One of the unwritten stories in Adventist history is the influence that James White had in forming the ideas and sentences that came out under Ellen's name and pen. Although not noted as a literary writer or as a theologian, James did produce four published books. Two of these . . . were almost totally copied from others. The one on William Miller was taken from Sylvester Bliss (who in 1853 had written *Memoirs of William Miller*). The theology of *Life Incidents* was copied substantially from Uriah Smith and J. N. Andrews. Neither of these books was ever printed again under the name of James White as far as is known . . . But they were indeed printed under another name, that of Ellen G. White, his wife, a few years after his death in 1881 — but under the title of *The Great Controversy* (1884) . . . Comparison shows that words, sentences, quotations, thoughts, ideas, structures, paragraphs, and even total pages were taken from James White's book to Ellen's book under a new title — with no blush or shame, no mention of her husband, no thanks to Uriah Smith and J. N. Andrews, for the hard work and theological insights of anyone." *The White Lie*, pp. 222-223.

I encourage the reader to obtain a copy of *The White Lie* to see the full extent of the borrowing in the exhibits he presents.

Strangely enough, constant denials have been made about Ellen White's borrowing. In 1867 she wrote the following disclaimer. It referred specifically to health reform, but is representative of far more than that, as we shall see. Note:

"That which I have written in regard to health was not taken from books and papers . . . My views were written independent of books or the opinions of others." Manuscript 7-1867, or see *Review and Herald*, May 21, 1959, p. 8.

A year before his death in 1881, James White published *Life Sketches . . . of Elder James White and his wife, Mrs. Ellen G. White*. The following quotation does not appear in any later publications. It is taken from that first edition, pages 328-329:

"Does unbelief suggest that what she writes in her personal testimonies has been learned from others? We inquire, What time has she had to learn all these facts? and who for a moment can regard her as a Christian woman, if she gives her ear to gossip, then writes it out as a vision from God? In her published works there are many things

set forth which cannot be found in other books, and yet they are so clear and beautiful that the unprejudiced mind grasps them at once as truth. . . . If commentators and theological writers generally had seen these gems of thought which strike the mind so forcibly, and had they been brought out in print, all the ministers in the land could have read them. These men gather thoughts from books, and as Mrs. W. has written and spoken a hundred things, as truthful as they are beautiful and harmonious, which cannot be found in the writings of others, they are new to the most intelligent readers and hearers. And if they are not to be found in print, and are not brought out in sermons from the pulpit, where did Mrs. W. find them? From what source has she received the new and rich thoughts which are to be found in her writings and oral addresses? She could not have learned them from books, from the fact that they do not contain such thoughts. And, certainly she did not learn them from those ministers who had not thought of them. The case is a clear one. It evidently requires a hundred times the credulity to believe that Mrs. W. has learned these things of others, and has palmed them off as visions from God, than it does to believe that the Spirit of God has revealed them to her."

These statements cannot be misunderstood. Such a claim by James White was far, far from the truth. And, it strains credulity to accept that James White was ignorant of his wife's extensive borrowing. The next quotation is from a letter written by Ellen White, and is most pointed:

"I have not been in the habit of reading any doctrinal articles in the paper, that my mind should not have any understanding of any one's ideas and views, and that not a mold of any man's theories should have any connection with that which I write." Letter 37-1887, written to Waggoner and A. T. Jones, February 18, 1887, from Basel, Switzerland (White Estate).

And if that was not enough, we notice in the next quotation another disclaimer in 1904. So, from 1867 to 1904 denials were made that she had borrowed from any human source. Notice that she says it is "light that God has given me." It is a claim that *everything she wrote* was of divine origin:

"I am glad that you are having success in selling my books; for thus you are giving to the world the light that God has given me. These books contain clear, straight, unalterable truth and they should certainly be appreciated. The instruction they contain is not of human production." Letter 339-1904, White Estate.

There is no doubt that they wanted to leave the impression that there was no borrowing at all being done on any subject. But such literary borrowing was done from *the very beginning*. As a matter of fact, Ellen White's *very first vision*, that of December, 1844, borrowed extensively from another Adventist, William E. Foy. Foy had two "visions" in 1842 and another in 1844. In 1845, shortly before his death he published and copyrighted an account of his visions titled, "*The Christian Exper-*



ience of William E. Foy." Compare that title with Ellen White's later publication in 1851, *The Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White*. Even the titles are similar. The SDA Encyclopedia, page 475, says that Ellen Harmon "heard Foy speak in Beethoven Hall in her home city, Portland, Maine, when she was but a girl." Another interesting item is that Foy's tract was printed in Portland, Maine, by J. and C. H. Pearson, two brothers. Their father, John Pearson, Sr., is mentioned by Ellen White in *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, p. 64, so she was acquainted with the publishers of Foy's visions as well. Of the father she says: "Father Pearson . . . Like a tender father he tried to encourage and comfort me, bidding me believe I was not forsaken by the friend of sinners." I will take the space to show just a couple of instances of the extensive borrowing by Ellen White from William Foy:

"My guide now informed me what I must do, saying, 'thy spirit must return to yonder world, and thou must reveal those things which thou has seen.' . . . I then answered him saying, 'How can I return to yonder world?' . . . My guide then spread his wings, and brought my spirit gently to the earth . . ." William Foy, pp. 20-21. Emphasis supplied.

"And he (Jesus) said, 'You must go back to the earth again and relate to others what I have revealed to you.' Then an angel bore me gently down to this dark world. I begged my attending angel to let me remain in that place. I could not bear the thought of coming back to this dark world again. Then the angel said, 'You must go back . . .'" Ellen White, *Early Writings*, first edition, pp. 15 and 33, emphasis supplied.

"I then beheld, countless millions of shining ones coming with cards in their hands. These shining ones became our guides. The cards they bore shone above the brightness of the sun; and they placed them in our hands, but the names of them I could not read . . ." Foy, pp. 10-11, emphasis supplied.

"I saw four angels winging their way to the gate of the city. They were just presenting the golden card to the angel at the gate. . . . I asked my attending angel for an explanation of what I saw. He told me I could see no more then . . . All the angels that are commissioned to visit the earth hold a golden card, which they present to the angel at the gates of the city as they pass in and out . . ." Ellen White, *Early Writings*, first edition, pp. 30 and 32, emphasis supplied.

These are but samples of the extensive likenesses between the two which is easily seen by comparing their visions. Similar likenesses can be made between Ellen White and Joseph Smith of Mormonism. She also borrowed from Mormon standard works. Joseph Smith was killed in the Summer of 1844, bringing him more national attention right at the height of Millerite expectations. One researcher points out that Ellen White especially liked the book of Alma in the Book of Mormon.

Francis D. Nichol, in his defense of Ellen White, says of *The Great Controversy*:

"We think that the unprejudiced reader of *The Great Controversy*, for example, will have no difficulty in concluding that the book gives evidence of a grand design that was not copied from human writings, and that the limited borrowings from other authors do not dim the conviction as to that grand design. Or, to change the figure: There is a pulsing life in that book that cannot be found in secular or church histories, certainly not in the histories from which Mrs. White borrowed some of her descriptions. We believe the life that pulses in that book is God breathed — inspired of God." *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, p. 463.

We have already seen up to this point the lack of truth in that claim. But there's more evidence to come.

*The Great Controversy* story goes back to a claimed vision in 1858. Therein Ellen White was instructed to write out the story for publication. That same year Volume I of *Spiritual Gifts* appeared with the title *The Great Controversy*. This volume of 219 very small pages was later expanded into the four-volume series, *Spirit of Prophecy*, in 1870-1884, comprising 1,696 pages. This in turn was further expanded into the five-volume *Conflict of the Ages* series, comprising 3,507 pages. It seems revelation needed to be expanded and revised periodically. However, at the time of the "vision" in 1858 an interesting event occurred. In the Supplement of Volume 4 of the *Spirit of Prophecy* series, Arthur White, her grandson, wrote:

"Mrs. White ever sought to avoid being influenced by others. Shortly after the Great Controversy vision of March 14, 1858, at meetings in Battle Creek held over a weekend, she told the high points of what had been shown her in that vision. Elder J. N. Andrews, who at the time was in Battle Creek, was much interested. After one of the meetings he told her some of the things she had said were much like a book he had read. Then he asked if she had read *Paradise Lost*. She replied in the negative. He told her that he thought she would be interested in reading it . . ."

He goes on to say that a short time later Andrews brought her a copy of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which she determined not to read at the moment, but placed on a high shelf in the kitchen. She then finished writing her account. Arthur White says — "It is apparent that she did later read at least portions of *Paradise Lost*, for there is one phrase quoted in *Education*." All of this could hardly be entirely truthful. Not only did Andrews see a similarity between *Paradise Lost* in her 1858 account of the Great Controversy, but it became even more interesting. Volume 1 of the *Conflict of the Ages* series is called *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Following is an interesting presentation from *A Comparative Study of the Fall of Man as Treated by John Milton and Ellen G. White*. This was a masters thesis prepared by Adventist Ruth Elizabeth Burgeson at Pacific Union College. On Page 73 she says:

“Referring to the preceding chapters of this thesis, one is impressed by the similarity of factual content in *Paradise Lost* and in *Patriarchs and Prophets*. In fact, the writer of this thesis found no disagreement between the two authors in stating significant facts. There were frequent differences in manner of statement, in amount of detail, in emphasis given, or even in the exact order of a series of events, but none in facts pertinent to the Biblical story.

Of unusual significance is the correlation found in a number of instances where both authors depict with some detail an experience which is not found in the Bible. Among such events are the following:

1. The scene in heaven before and during the rebellion with the loyal angels trying to win the disaffected ones back to allegiance to God.
2. The warnings issued to Eve to stay by her husband's side; her subsequent straying.
3. The elaborate setting for the actual temptation with Satan's analyzed point by point.
4. The detailed picture of the immediate results of sin on Adam and Eve and on the animal and vegetable world about them.
5. The explanation of the basic reason for Adam's fall: uxoriousness.
6. The angel's chronicling of future events to Adam.
7. The feelings of both Adam and Eve as they left the garden.

These likenesses in the narrative on points where the Scriptures are silent intensify the question: Why are these two authors, living two hundred years apart, so much in agreement on major facts?”

The answer to that is, of course, that Ellen White depended on Milton for much of her material. Yet, her grandson claims she “sought to avoid being influenced by others.” And remember what Nichol said about there being a grand design “that was not copied from human writings.”

But, admissions continue to come in. Adventist Earl Amundson said at the Glacier View “Trial” of Desmond Ford:

“The time has come to be critical of our own method. We as Seventh-day Adventists have felt secure in that we have got the revealed truth; and no matter what others may say against us, we have God on our side and the prophet, Ellen G. White. Now we are discovering that much of what she wrote in *Desire of the Ages* and *Great Controversy* was copied from others. How do we really know what we claim to know? We are forced to ask questions on matters of interpretation . . . ”  
*Authority and Conflict — Consensus and Unity*, p. 12.

Donald McAdams, President of Southwestern Adventist College, said of the results of his own studies of Ellen White's sources:

“ . . . the historical portions of *The Great Controversy* that I have examined are selective abridgements and adaptations of historians. Ellen White was not just borrowing paragraphs here and there that she ran across in her reading, but in fact following historians page after page, leaving out much material, but using their sequence, some of their ideas, and often their words. In the examples I have examined I have found no historical fact in her text that is not in their text. The handwritten manuscript on John Huss follows the historian so closely that

it does not even seem to have gone through an intermediary stage, but rather from the historian's page to Mrs. White's manuscript, including historical errors and moral exhortations." *Spectrum*, Vol. 10, No. 4, p. 34.

The rest of McAdam's article on *Shifting Views of Inspiration* is an interesting insight into the controversy and findings up to that point, the Spring of 1980. One more point is important to look at from his article. He quotes Ron Graybill, an assistant secretary of the White Estate, who had presented some of his own findings on the subject. Graybill says:

"There does not appear to be any objective historical fact in Mrs. White's account that she could not have gained from the literary sources on which she was drawing except in one detail. The overall impression gained from this study by this researcher is that it sustains McAdam's main point — that the objective and mundane historical narrative was based on the work of historians, not on visions." *Ibid.*, p. 35.

But, of course, this is the rule with Ellen White, not the exception. The old claims that have been made about Ellen White are becoming increasingly hard for Adventists to swallow.

One of the most recurring phrases used by Ellen White was "I saw," or "I was shown." This indicated that she was relating an "inspired vision" from God. We have seen some of the statements about her historical portions in her books, along with doctrinal ones as well, but what about the evident statements of what was revealed to her from God? Was there any copying there? We have noted that she relied on William Foy in her first few visions. But, such copying was being denied as recently as the Spring of 1981. Ron Graybill said, under the heading of "No clear example thus far":

"It is possible that we will yet discover some clear instance where Mrs. White says 'I saw,' referring to a specific vision, and then proceeds to describe that vision using words borrowed from other writers. This would not necessarily be difficult to harmonize with our belief that such material is still fully inspired. Thus far, however, we have no clear example of this. We know that after Mrs. White visited Zurich in 1887 she returned home and the next day described what she had seen with her physical eyes by using words borrowed from James Wylie's *History of Protestantism*. Wylie had given a beautiful description of the striking scenery around Zurich, and Mrs. White used his words to describe what she had just seen herself. So it would not be surprising if she used the words of others to describe what she had seen in a vision." *Adventist Review*, April 2, 1981, p. 7.

It appears that she couldn't even describe something she had seen on a trip without extensive borrowing from someone else. But, Graybill changed his tune shortly. In the *Adventist Review* of July 29, 1982, he said:

"Since our last report on this topic ('Did Mrs. White 'Borrow' in Reporting a Vision?' *Adventist Review*, April 2, 1981, and Letters to the Editor, April 30), research has located several further instances of which Ellen White used the language of other authors to report what had been revealed to her. Two examples will suffice . . ." p. 3.

Notice that it went, within one year, from "no clear example" to "several." Graybill went on to detail the source of the two examples. Among the attempts to justify what she did from Bible passages, he says:

"It could be that in some instances that Mrs. White, after experiencing a vision, just happened to find words to describe it in a book she was reading. But in my opinion it is more like that she sometimes read a passage in a book, was impressed by it, and later, in a vision, the same concepts, being true, were impressed upon her mind again." *Ibid.*, p. 5.

My, how convenient. With this admission in mind, let's look at her *Testimonies*, Vol. 5. The authority of those "testimonies" has been dealt with in previous chapters. But, to keep the context in mind, notice on page 64 she says — "*Yet now when I send you a testimony of warning and reproof, many of you declare it to be merely the opinion of Sister White. You have thereby insulted the Spirit of God.*" Or, on page 66: "*If you seek to turn aside the counsel of God to suit yourselves, if you lessen the confidence of God's people in the testimonies He has sent them, you are rebelling against God as certainly as were Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.*" Or, again, on page 67: "*Weak and trembling, I arose at three o'clock in the morning to write to you. God was speaking through clay. You might say that this communication was only a letter. Yes, it was a letter, but prompted by the Spirit of God, to bring before your minds things that had been shown me. In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision — the precious rays of light shining from the throne.*" Now, that should be clear enough. So, we find the following on the very next page, 68:

"What voice will you acknowledge as the voice of God? What power has the Lord in reserve to correct your errors and show you your course as it is? What power to work in the church? If you refuse to believe until every shadow of uncertainty and every possibility of doubt is removed you will never believe. The doubt that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to faith. Faith rests upon evidence, not demonstration. The Lord requires us to obey the voice of duty, when there are other voices all around us to pursue an opposite course. It requires earnest attention from us to distinguish the voice which

speaks from God."

But, these statements were not original with Ellen White, but certainly didn't come from God either! Notice the similarity with the following:

"We must not defer our obedience till, every shadow of uncertainty and every possibility of mistake is removed. The doubt that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to faith, for faith rests upon probability, not demonstration. . . . We must obey the voice of duty when there are many other voices crying against it, and it requires earnest heed to distinguish the one which speaks for God." Daniel March, *Night Scenes in the Bible*, 1868, p. 131 (facsimile reprint from Kregel Publishing Co., 1979).

It is obvious where she got her material for her "testimony." It was "borrowed" from Daniel March. In *Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 141, is found the following statements of "I was shown":

"I was shown that one great cause of the existing deplorable state of things is that parents do not feel under obligation to bring up their children to conform to physical law. Mothers love their children with an idolatrous love and indulge their appetite when they know that it will injure their health and thereby bring upon them disease and unhappiness. This cruel kindness is manifested to a great extent in the present generation. . . . Mothers who are doing this work will reap with bitterness the fruit of the seed they have sown. They have sinned against Heaven and against their children, and God will hold them accountable. The managers and teachers of schools . . ."

When we compare this with another writer we find out where Ellen White got her "I was shown":

"Parents are also under obligation to teach and oblige their children to conform to physical law for their own sake. The mother who suffers her children to eat irregularly, or violate the laws of their systems in any other way commits a crime against her offspring, against humanity, and against Heaven, for which God will hold her responsible. How strange and unaccountable, that mothers should love their children so tenderly as to indulge them in what they have occasion to know may injure their constitutions and impair their happiness for life! May many children be delivered from such mothers, and from such cruel kindness! . . . The managers and teachers of schools . . ." L. B. Coles, *Philosophy of Health*, 1851, pp. 144-145.

She was heavily dependent on Coles in writing out her health reform ideas, which she passed off as coming from God, obedience being necessary to salvation. Remember that in 1867 she was claiming: "That which I have written in regard to health was not taken from books and papers . . . My views were written independent of books or of the opinions of others." (see p. 29). If we accepted that statement as factual, which we don't, at least it is noted that by 1872 she was liberally borrowing from Coles and others.

In this chapter we have just barely touched the tip of the iceberg of Ellen White's plagiarism, for that indeed is what it is. She was guilty of "copying or imitating the language, ideas and thoughts of another and passing off the same as one's original work." Whether we use the modern definition or the definition from her own day, it is the same. She stands convicted by her own pen.

## Chapter Six

### THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Adventism began with the work of William Miller who set the date for the return of Jesus in the period of Spring 1843 to Spring 1844. They were quite disappointed in the failure of the Lord to return. The modern Seventh-day Adventists originated from a group of Miller's followers who accepted a later date of October, 1844, after the disappointment of the previous one. More will be said about this in the next chapter. After the "great disappointment" of October, 1844 Jesus was still looked for in a *very short time*, however. The first of these statements is found in a broadside dated April 6, 1846, which contained several of Ellen White's "visions." The mention of the quotation following, about the "Midnight Cry," refers to the events immediately preceding October 22, 1844:

"In February, 1845, I had a vision of events commencing with the Midnight Cry. . . . Then he raised His right arm and we heard His lovely voice saying, 'Wait here — I am going to my Father to receive the Kingdom; keep your garments spotless, and in a little while I will return from the wedding and receive you to myself.'"

"They fell all the way along the path one after another, until we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming."

This was later printed in other forms and finally in a collection called *Early Writings* in 1882. In that book, page 27, is recorded a statement from a "vision" of 1847:

"And as God spake the day and hour of Jesus' coming, and delivered the everlasting covenant to his people, he spake one sentence, and then paused, while the words were rolling through the earth."

So, in both 1845 and 1847 Ellen White claimed that not only was the Lord to return shortly but that *she had been told the exact day and hour of that return!* This second coming was to be preceded by what she called *the time of trouble*. She supposedly had a vision in November of 1848 called the Dorchester Vision. In *Life Sketches*, page 125, she presents just a short statement about that vision. But, Joseph Bates, one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, was present when that vision supposedly occurred. He took down what Ellen White said, though "some sentences escaped us." What he did record he claims was "word for word." Ellen White claimed from her "vision":



"The time of trouble has commenced, it is begun. The reason why the four winds have not let go, is because the saints are not all sealed. It's on the increase, and will increase more and more; the trouble will never end until the earth is rid of the wicked." *A Seal of the Living God*, pp. 24-26.

So the *time of trouble* that had begun by November, 1848 would not end until all the wicked had been swept from the earth. However, just two months later, January 5, 1849, she had another vision, called the Rocky Hill Vision. She says there:

"I saw that Michael had not stood up, and that the time of trouble such as never was, had not yet commenced." *Present Truth*, August, 1849, p. 22.

First she says it is and then it's not. But, later that month, January 31, 1849 a broadside appeared that carried an extensive treatment of what was expected of the people in the short time remaining before the Second Coming and what to do during the *time of trouble*:

"For two years past, the Lord has shown me in vision, repeatedly, that it is contrary to the Bible to make any provision for our temporal wants in the time of trouble. I saw that if the saints have food laid up by them, or in the fields in the time of trouble when sword, famine, and pestilence are in the land, it will be taken from them by violent hands. . . . I saw if any held on to their property, and did not inquire duty of the Lord, he would not make duty known and they would be permitted to keep their property, and then in the time of trouble their property would come up before them like a mountain to crush them. Then they tried to get rid of it, but could not. . . . Oh! that we had let it go, and laid up treasure in heaven. . . . Now is the time to lay up treasure in heaven, and to set out hearts in order, ready for the time of trouble. . . . The Lord has shown me the danger of letting our minds be filled with worldly thoughts and cares. I saw that some minds were led away from present truth and a love of the holy Bible, by reading other exciting books, and others were filled with perplexity and care for what they shall eat, drink and wear. I saw some, looking too far off for the coming of the Lord. Time has continued on a few years more, and in this way their minds are being led from present truth. . . . I saw that the time for Jesus to be in the most holy Place was nearly finished, and that time can last but a very little longer. . . ."

Well, again, time is nearly finished, and there aren't many years left. And remember, she was told *twice before the day and hour of His return!*

The first regular paper published by the Ellen White branch of Adventism was called *Present Truth*. It was a semi-monthly edited by James White. Note the reference to "present truth" in the previous quotation. That is a phrase that constantly cropped up in their articles and conversation and so was a natural title for their first paper. So again in 1849, this time the September issue of *Present Truth*, Ellen White said:

"We have but a little space of time left for the work of God. Nothing should be too dear to sacrifice, for the salvation of the scattered and torn flock of Jesus. Those who make a covenant with God by sacrifice now, will soon be gathered home to share a rich reward, and possess the new kingdom forever and ever. . . . I heard an angel say, 'speed the swift messengers, speed the swift messengers; for the case of every soul will soon be decided, either for life, or for death.' Those only who have the seal of the living God, will be sheltered from the storm of wrath, that will soon fall on the heads of those who have rejected the truth."

But this same line continues. In 1851 they published a book titled *A Sketch of the Christian Experiences and Views of Ellen G. White*. (This was later incorporated and expanded into her 1882 book *Early Writings*.) On pages 52 and 55, under the heading of "A view given me June 17" (1850), she said:

"Said my accompanying angel, 'Time is almost finished. Do ye reflect the lovely image of Jesus as ye should?' Then I was pointed to the earth, and saw that there would have to be a getting ready among those who have of late embraced the third angel's message. Said the angel, 'Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye will have to die a greater death to the world than ye have ever yet died.' I saw that there was a great work to do for them, and but little time to do it in. . . . I saw that some of us have had time to get the truth, and to advance step by step, and every step we have taken has given us strength to take the next. But now time is almost finished, and what we have been years learning, they will have to learn in a few months."

So, in 1850 it was just a few months more and the time would be finished. This was narrowing it down. Of course, she ought to know because she was twice told the exact day and hour of His coming. This lends authority to her other statements of the nearness of His return. But, essentially the same statement was made by Ellen White on February 12, 1854, less than four years later. In an unpublished manuscript she says:

"It is too late in the day to feed with milk. If souls a month or two old in the truth, who are about to enter the time of trouble such as never was, can not hear all the straight truth, or endure the strong meat of the straightness of the way, how will they stand in the day of battle? Truths that we have been years learning must be learned in a few months by those who now embrace the Third Angel's Message. We had to search and wait the opening of truth, receiving a ray of light here and a ray there, laboring and pleading for God to reveal truth to us. But now the truth is plain; its rays are brought together. . . . It is a disgrace for those who have been in the truth for years to talk of feeding souls who have been months in the truth, upon milk. It shows they know little of the leadings of the Spirit of the Lord, and realize not the time we are living in. Those who embrace the truth now will have to step fast." Quoted in *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, by Francis D. Nichol, p. 259.

In attempting to explain away what Ellen White said in this

statement, and some of the others we have already noted, Nichol says this:

"Two points are evident. First, that Mrs. White is using the phrase 'in a few months' in relation, specifically, to the time needed for learning the truth. She is not limiting the day of the Lord to a few months ahead. In fact, in her 1854 statement she is not discussing specifically the second coming of Christ, though she does talk of our being 'about to enter the time of trouble such as never was,' and of our need 'to step fast.' But this general statement about the imminence of troubles ahead is intended only to show why new believers should not continue to feed on 'milk' but should in a few months be ready to 'endure the strong meat of the straightness of the way.' Otherwise, she inquires, 'how will they stand in the day of battle?' *Ibid.*, p. 260.

But, notice the urgency of Ellen White's statements. Why was it so urgent that the new converts learn so much in just a few months if not because of the soon return of the Lord? Nichol tries to brush aside her most pointed statements but they just won't budge. Let's keep in mind as well the context of her 1854 statement and remember what she had been saying since 1845. She claimed to have been told twice, the day and hour of the Lord's return. She had "repeatedly" been shown that it was wrong to make provision for physical needs in the "time of trouble," which time was almost upon them, and that "time can last but a very little longer." Also, "we have but a little space of time left for the work of God," and a storm of wrath would "soon fall on the heads of those who have rejected the truth." Her accompanying angel said "time is almost finished," and she said "I saw . . . time is almost finished, and what we have been years learning, they will have to learn in a few months." These statements furnish the context for her statements in 1854 that Nichol refers to. She says there, "Truths that we have been years learning must be learned in a few months by those who now embrace the Third Angel's Message." And, some who have been in the truth for years "realize not the time we are living in. . . . Those who embrace the truth now will have to step fast." It is evident that the same statements, and the urgency of her remarks, all pertain to the same thing; the Lord is expected to return very soon. Otherwise the talk of learning in just a few months has no meaning. The attempt by Nichol to turn her 1854 statements in another direction fails completely in view of both the larger context and immediate context of her statements in 1854.

I suppose the most famous, and controversial, statement she made on this subject was in May of 1856 at a Conference meeting. She said:

"I was shown the company present at the Conference. Said the angel: 'Some food for worms, some subjects of the seven last plagues, some will be alive and remain upon the earth to be translated at the coming of Jesus.' " *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, pp. 131-132.

This has called for a lot of explanation on the part of Adventists apologists. Notice that she insists, by "vision," that some of those present would be alive and remain on the earth until Jesus returned. This is in perfect keeping with what she had been saying for the previous nine years, although the "few months" and "short time" had strung out for a considerable length. This prediction is also equal to several given by Joseph Smith of Mormon fame. He made the same predictions about some of his followers being alive until the Lord returned. He and Ellen White both failed.

I want the reader to clearly note, from the coverup made by Ellen White and the Adventist apologists, by the explanations, we will note shortly as to why Jesus hadn't returned, that *they are admitting that every statement we have quoted thus far means just what it says, that Ellen White was predicting, by "inspiration," the Second Coming of Christ sometime in the early 1850's!* So, these quotations have not been misquoted nor misapplied. They mean just what they say, just the way they read!

What excuse did Ellen White make for the failure of the Lord to return as she had been saying? The 1844 debacle was blamed on God. She said in 1850 about that failure:

"The Lord showed me that the 1843 chart was directed by his hand, and that no part of it should be altered; that the figures were as he wanted them. That his hand was over and hid a mistake in some of the figures, so that none could see it, until his hand was removed." *Present Truth*, Vol. I, no. 11, Nov., 1850, p. 87.

It's convenient to be able to blame the misunderstanding on God; no human error was involved, she claims. It also seems strange that God wanted the chart to be just as it was, had not wanted it altered, and yet there was a mistake in the figures. Her explanations for the failure of her own predictions took various courses. And, she *was* questioned by her disciples about the matter:

"As the subject was presented before me, the period of Christ's ministration seemed almost accomplished. Am I accused of falsehood because time has continued longer than my testimony seemed to indicate? How is it with the testimonies of Christ and His apostles? Were they deceived? Paul writes to the Corinthians . . . I Cor. 7:29-30 . . . Again, in his epistle to the Romans, he says . . . Rom. 13:12 . . . And from Patmos, Christ speaks to us by the beloved John . . . Rev. 22:6-7. The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as very short. Thus it has always been presented to me. It is true that time

has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the word of the Lord failed? Never! It should be remembered that the promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional." *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, pp. 66-69.

Notice that again she is putting the blame on God. The fault for our misunderstanding lies with God, for that is simply the way He has presented it before, and his promises are conditional, she claims. Well, let's examine her Scripture references first.

I Corinthians 7:29 says: "But this I saw, brethren, the time is shortened, that henceforth both those that have wives may be as though they have none; and those . . ." Ellen White claimed that this refers to the second coming of Christ and that Paul said the "time is shortened," but Paul was mistaken about that, misstated it, or because of some unknown reason God decided to extend the time. This passage is supposed to parallel her own early predictions of the "short time." However, let's note the context of the passage. In verse 26 Paul shows that he was talking about "the distress that is upon us." He doesn't identify what that distress is, but it is reflected in several of the subjects he discusses at this point. In verse 28 he talks about one marital condition and says, "Yet such shall have tribulation in the flesh; and I would spare you." Why would they have tribulation in the flesh? Well, because of the "present distress." It is in that context that he talks about the "time is shortened" for their benefit. The "time" must refer to the time of the "present distress" and has nothing to do with the second coming of Christ. A like idea is found in Matthew 24:22: "And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved . . ." This refers to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in the late first century.

Romans 13:12 says, "The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." The verses before and after this one show Paul's reference to that very time as the "day at hand." His figure of speech is that we are not to be as though we are asleep in darkness, the night is over, the day is at hand, so v. 13, "let us walk becomingly, as in the day . . ." The subject is *night-time* and *daylight* and what is done in each. It has nothing to do with the second coming of Christ.

Revelation 22:6-7 says: "sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass. And behold, I come quickly . . ." The same phrase about "shortly come to pass" is found in chapter 1, verse 1. It means just exactly that. It talks about things that were shortly to come to pass, and they

did. To some extent it depends on the interpretation some people place on the whole book of Revelation, but it cannot be used to refer to the second coming of Christ. Neither can the statement "behold, I come quickly." There are two facts about this. First, Jesus "came" in several different senses, as a rundown of the term in the New Testament shows. Secondly, the term "quickly" refers to the *manner* of His coming, not the imminence; it means "swiftly."

Other passages could have been used by Ellen White, such as I Peter 4:7 or Hebrews 10:25, but seeing those passages apply to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans she would have had to pervert them as she did the passages we have just looked at. There is no parallel at all between these passages and what Ellen White did.

Another part of this subject is that no New Testament writer taught the people of the first century that the return of Jesus was imminent, impending, going to occur in just a few years or months. It is best said by Foy E. Wallace, Jr. in the following quotation:

"The New Testament does not teach anything now that it did not teach then; if it did not teach the imminence of the coming of Christ then, it does not teach it now. Paul did not teach the imminent return of Christ. Hear him: 'I know this, that after my departing shall greivous wolves enter . . . and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things' — Acts 20:29-30. Paul warned of things to happen after his death. Paul knew by inspiration that Christ was not coming before his death. Peter did not teach that the coming of Christ was imminent. Writing to the scattered members of the Jerusalem church he said the 'putting off of this, my tabernacle cometh shortly, even as the Lord Jesus signified unto me.' Forty years before, Jesus had signified to Simon Peter the manner of death he should die. 'Verily, verily I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest, but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God.' — John 21:18-19. Forty years later, Peter said, 'Even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me' — 2 Peter 1:14. Peter knew by the Lord's own words that Christ would not come during his lifetime. He knew the manner of death that he would die. Yet it is claimed that Peter and Paul taught the imminent return of Christ. Neither of them so taught, no passage in the New Testament so teaches. The question of imminence did not enter into the promise of his coming." *God's Prophetic Word*, p. 230.

The next argument of Ellen White and the Adventist apologists is on the "conditional" nature of promises and prophecy. The argument is used by Nichol in his *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, pages 102-111, and in the White Estate manuscript. Jeremiah 18:9-10 is referred to: "At what instance I shall speak concerning

a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in My sight, that it obey not My voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." No one has a fuss with this statement, but it only shows that wickedness will bring destruction instead of good. The same can be said for individuals. However, when we apply this to the second coming of Jesus it doesn't fit. At whatever time in history that He comes again there will be righteous to reward and wicked to punish. If He waits until there is no wickedness and rebellion in the world, or associated with those who are supposed to be His people, then He never will return. Nichol appeals to the case of Nineveh in the book of Jonah as a case in point, showing that Jonah was told to go to Ninevah to tell them how long they had until the city would be overthrown. However, the people of Ninevah repented, seeking God's forgiveness; God did not destroy the city at that time, He changed His mind about the destruction planned. But what are we to say about Sodom and Gomorrah? God said he was going to destroy those cities. Abraham besought God that if just ten righteous could be found in the city that it would be spared. Only Lot and his family were righteous in the whole place, and God destroyed the cities as He stated. But none of this has any bearing on the time God has planned for the Lord's return. We will see how Ellen White attempted to cover up her former predictions in keeping with this argument of conditional promises.

We have already seen one lengthy statement from Ellen White attempting to explain her previous statements and why they failed. That statement was made shortly after publication of *Early Writings* in 1882. But, she said more than that. Her defense changed through the years. In 1868 she blamed the Lord's long-suffering, so that none of His people would perish, for the delay:

"The long night of gloom is trying; but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God's unwillingness to have His people perish has been the reason of so long delay. But the coming of the morning to the faithful, and of the night to the unfaithful, is right upon us." *Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 194.

Notice that she states *specifically* that this is the reason for the long delay. She says that God delayed his promised return because of unwillingness to have His people perish, yet admitting that when He *finally* does come there will be some that are "unfaithful." Certainly the Bible teaches that when the Lord returns there will be some who are among His people that will be lost because of unfaithfulness. If He delays His coming until *all* are faithful then He never will come. And, with each passing year there are some who die, some who fall away, some who

continue in far less than faithful service, and some new converts that have much to learn and to change. Along with these are the few that could be described as "faithful" in the way Ellen White insisted they be. That has always been the case, and will be till the Lord returns. Her excuse for His "delay" is fallacious. In later years, however, she gave *another* reason for the failure of the Lord to return as promised. She blamed it on the failure of the Adventist people to do the work they were supposed to be doing. Note:

"If those who claimed to have a living experience in the things of God had done their appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would have been warned ere this, and the Lord Jesus would have come in power and great glory." *Review and Herald*, Oct. 6, 1896.

"Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God." *Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 450 (1900).

Here it was the fault of the Adventist people in not working diligently in preaching their message that caused the Lord to delay His return. She puts the same thing in another way in the following reference:

"It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain." *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 22 (1904).

Again, the fault lies with the disciples. The White Estate manuscript appeals to II Peter 3:12 as justification for the above statement. That passage says — "looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God . . ." They say that "earnestly desiring" means to "hasten," and so Christians can "hasten" the day of the coming by their conduct. However, in looking at the word "*speudo*" as used here, it is a "transitive" verb and means just as translated, "earnestly desiring." See W. E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words*. The White Estate is wrong again.

In 1892 Ellen White made a most interesting statement against either time setting or even being engrossed in the subject. Here is what she says:

"The times and the seasons God has put in His own power. And why has not God given us this knowledge? — Because we would not make right use of it if He did. A condition of things would result from this knowledge among our people that would greatly retard the word of God in preparing a people to stand in the great day that is to come. We are not to live upon time excitement. We are not to be engrossed with



speculations in regard to the time and the seasons which God has not revealed. Jesus has told his disciples to 'watch,' but not for definite time. His followers are to be in the position of those who are listening for the order of their Captain; they are to watch, wait, pray, and work, as they approach the time for the coming of the Lord; but no one will be able to predict just when that time will come; for 'of that day and hour knoweth no man.' " *Review and Herald*, March 22, 1892.

Compare this statement with her early ones that were predicting a time for the return in just a short while, and whipping the Adventist people into following certain conduct that she specified. She said in 1845 and 1847, both times, that she was told the "day and hour" of the Lord's return. Yet, here she says clearly "but no one will be able to predict just when that time will come; for 'of that day and hour knoweth no man.'" Perhaps she had forgotten what she had written before, or hoped that everyone else had. In the article just quoted she talks about a man at campmeeting in Jackson, Michigan, in 1884 who was theorizing about when the Lord would return. This brought from her the quotation we just noticed. Yet, in 1886 she was still talking about the imminent return of Christ:

"The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. We have but a little time in which to make ready. If precious opportunities are slighted, it will result in eternal loss." *Review and Herald*, June 15, 1886.

Why did she not say that "if precious opportunities are slighted, the Lord will delay His coming?" That is what she said a few years later as to why He had not returned as predicted. Like the Jehovah's Witnesses have done, she kept dangling the carrot before her people. Even to this day Adventist preachers dangle the same carrot, insisting the Lord is just about to return and time is short. They don't know any more about it than Ellen White did.

We have seen in this chapter the failure of Ellen White as a prophetess due to predicting something that did not happen. Well over a hundred and twenty-five years have passed since she started her predictions about the soon coming of Jesus, and the end of things that would come within the lifetime of some of her disciples. Their deaths are dramatic testimony that she as a false prophetess.

## Chapter Seven

### THE SHUT DOOR

Our last chapter dealt with Ellen White's prophecies concerning the time for the second coming of Christ. She expected that event shortly after the October 22, 1844 date, perhaps agreeing later with Joseph Bates, who set the time for 1851. However, others, including at one time her husband, looked for that event in 1845 or 1846. This expectation was tied in with the views concerning October, 1844 and the period following. Though Jesus had been expected to return on that date, the failure did not deter the Millerites for long. They decided that the date was correct, just the *event* was wrong, a course that the Jehovah's Witnesses would take concerning the failure of the Lord's return in 1914. They decided that on that date Jesus entered the second compartment of the heavenly sanctuary and began an "investigative judgement" of His people. This period would be of very short duration, hence their expectation of His soon coming. In keeping with all this, during that short period the opportunity for salvation for the world was over; there was no way anyone could be saved other than the small group of Adventists who had accepted the Millerite message and the "midnight cry." This was known as the *shut door*. Upon this theorizing all other peculiarly SDA positions rest. Yet, even after the "shut door" was given up, the positions that came from it were kept.

William Miller, who started the movement, had predicted the second coming of Jesus for sometime "about the year 1843," but set no exact day in that period of time. It was thought to be at some point between March 21st, 1843 and the same date in 1844. There was a great disappointment after the passing of the spring of '44 among the Millerites, but that wasn't the end of things for them. An erratic and unstable Millerite minister named Samuel S. Snow, along with George Storrs, who gave the group their "no soul in man" position, set a much later date. As early as February 16, 1844, Snow published an article setting forth that the "second coming" would occur on the tenth day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar, the day of atonement. He later set the date of October 22, 1844, which was the tenth day of the seventh month in keeping with the Karaite Jewish calendar. This became known as "*the seventh month movement*." It was in early August, 1844, at a five day campmeeting where Snow presented his views, that the "seventh-month movement"

caught fire. Another phrase enters the vocabulary at this point. Between the August campmeeting and October 22 was the period to be known as "*the midnight cry*." This was also referred to as "the *true* midnight cry," especially in this "seventh-month movement," though later SDA writers simply referred to it as "the midnight cry." It was only at the last moment that William Miller accepted this view of Snow's and held it for several months after that date, but then gave it up and preached against them.

All of their figuring was based on the parable of Matthew 25:1-13 concerning the wise and foolish virgins, the bridegroom, etc. So, "at midnight" the announcement came that "the bridegroom cometh." They reasoned that a "day" in prophetic reckoning was a "year." But, "midnight" amounted to "half a year." This six month period that stretched from the springtime disappointment of Miller's original reckoning, to the October 22 date, was further divided in the middle by "midnight." This gave them the time beginning with the August campmeeting, approximately, till October 22 as the time for the "midnight cry," the preaching of the message that the "bridegroom cometh." The "five wise virgins" were the people who accepted the Millerite message and the October 22 date. The "five foolish virgins" applied to *all others*. When the bridegroom came (October 22, 1844) the wise virgins (Millerites) entered with Him, and *the door was shut*. All others were left on the outside, cut off from the bridegroom. *This was the basis for the "shut door" doctrine that would have such far reaching consequences.*

The Millerite movement then divided into "shut door" Adventists and "open door" Adventists, with their own ministers, organizations, and publications. The Seventh-day Adventist Church developed from the "shut door" group and attained the prominence that the others did not. They were known in the early years as the "sabbath and shut door people." There were several warring factions among the Millerites, each having some distinctive test of faithfulness; "footwashing" and "greeting with a holy kiss" were two such tests. After the Sabbath was accepted, coming in via Joseph Bates, it became the distinctive mark, the "seal," of the righteous remnant.

But, for several years the "shut door" dominated a significant part of their thinking and actions, or non-action as the case was. After all, if the door was shut against the world, there would be no reason to preach to anyone to try to convert them; opportunity for salvation was past for them. To clearly establish just what *shut door* meant, let's look at some of the statements made by its advocates. First of all, William Miller himself, who at first was a "shut door" advocate. A letter from Miller dated No-

vember 18, 1844, just after the "great disappointment," was first printed in *The Advent Herald* for December 11, 1844. It was later reprinted in *The Advent Review* Special of September, 1850. Miller said:

"We have done our work in warning sinners, and in trying to awake a formal church. God in his providence has *shut the door*; we can only stir one another up to be patient; and be diligent to make our calling and election sure."

Miller also wrote in *The Advent Herald* for February 12, 1845 that "I did believe and must confess I do now, that I have done my work in warning sinners, and that in the seventh month." However, by the Summer of 1845 Miller had changed his mind. He published his *Apology and Defence* about the movement in August of that year. He said on page 28:

"I have no confidence in any of the new theories that have grown out of that [seventh-month] movement, viz., that Christ then came as the Bridegroom, that the door of mercy was closed, that there is no salvation for sinners, that the seventh trumpet then sounded, or that it was a fulfillment of prophecy in any sense." Quoted in *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, by Francis D. Nichol, p. 168.

Certainly Miller's testimony to what "shut door" meant should be accurate. Joseph Turner and Apollos Hale published only one issue of *The Advent Mirror*, that of January, 1845. The entire issue dealt with Matthew 25. Keep Joseph Turner in mind for future reference. On pages 3-4 of that one issue they say:

"But if the door is shut is there anything more to do for our fellowmen? There may be something, though, on any supposition there cannot be much more to be done. If we attempt to labor as we have done heretofore, it amounts to but little; if we should change our position and try to labor as others do, we could not expect to do any better than they do, and that is a little nearer to nothing than we are doing. . . . But can any sinners be converted if the door is shut? Of course they cannot, though changes that may appear to be conversions may take place. . . . But to think of laboring to convert the great mass of the world at such a time, would be as idle as it would have been for the Israelites, when they were down by the Red Sea, to have turned about to convert the Egyptians. It would be labor lost, to say nothing of the danger we might incur upon our own souls."

Certainly that is clear enough as to the meaning of "shut door." James White also has a good deal to say about the subject. Note the following:

"The fall of Babylon commenced in the spring of '43 when the churches all around, began to fall into a cold state, and was complete on the 7th month '44, when the last faint ray of hope was taken up from a wicked world and church." *The Day-Star*, September 20, 1845, p. 26.

"From the ascension, to the shutting of the door, Oct., 1844, Jesus

stood with widespread arms of love, and mercy; ready to receive and plead the cause of every sinner, who would come to God by him." *A Word to the Little Flock*, 1847, p. 2.

It is clear from this last quotation that the shutting of the door in October, 1844 meant that Jesus *no longer* "stood with widespread arms of love, and mercy; ready to receive and plead the cause of every sinner . . ." That is what James White considered to be the meaning of "shut door." In an extensive article in *The Present Truth*, May, 1850, he dealt in great detail with the subject, especially on the shut door. In that article he says, page 79:

"From the best light we could then obtain from the autumnal types we were very confident that the days would end at the seventh month. . . . When we came up to that point of time, all our sympathy, burden and prayers for sinners ceased, and the unanimous feeling and testimony was, that our work for the world was finished for ever."

The rest of the article establishes that he still believed that. His article was to establish that what they had been preaching for the previous five years was correct. Keep in mind the dates on these articles. They range from the Fall of 1844 up to 1850-51.

Joseph Bates was one of the founders of the SDA Church. He convinced the others on the Sabbath. Here are three statements from him, 1847-1850:

"I believe the work is of God, and is given to comfort and strengthen his 'scattered,' 'torn,' and 'pealed people,' since the closing up of our work for the world in October, 1844." *A Word to the Little Flock*, printed by James White, 1847, p. 21.

"How many scores of writers could be called up here, if time and space would admit it, to prove how clearly this cry has been fulfilled, and that our work ended here for the world. I know it is called infidelity now and even blasphemy to say so." *Second Advent Way Marks and High Heaps*, 1847, p. 33.

"Here his work ceased: Ministering and Mediating for the *whole* world forever; and he like his pattern in the type, entered the Most Holy Place, bearing upon his breast plate of Judgement the twelve tribes of the House of Israel. We were disappointed in our, then explained, expectation. Jesus did not come to this earth then, but the Bridegroom did come, thus fulfilling the parable, and they that were ready went in with him to the Marriage and the door was shut. The present truth in this is: That the master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and now stands beside the Ark containing the commandments. The 'Present Truth,' then, of this third angel's message, is, *The Sabbath and Shut Door*." *An Explanation of the Typical and Anti-Typical Sanctuary*, 1850, pp. 9, 16.

Finally, but not least, let's hear what Ellen White said in 1884 about what "shut door" meant in those early years:

"After the passing of the time of expectation, in 1844, Adventists still believed the Saviour's coming to be very near; they held that they

had reached an important crisis, and that the work of Christ as man's intercessor before God, had ceased. Having given the warning of the judgement near, they felt that their work for the world was done, and they lost their burden of soul for the salvation of sinners, while the bold and blasphemous scoffing of the ungodly seemed to them another evidence that the Spirit of God had been withdrawn from the rejecters of his mercy. All this confirmed them in the belief that probation had ended, or, as they then expressed it, 'the door of mercy was shut.' " *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 268.

There should now be no misunderstanding about what "shut door" meant through the period of five or six years following October, 1844. *This is the ONLY meaning that "shut door" had in that period.* Indeed, the writings of the White/Bates group, as well as their opposers, abounded with shut door statements and allusions. But, the position on the shut door had to change. Time dragged on, the Lord did not return, and other people became interested in Adventism. The door began to crack a little, then to open wide so that the Adventist gospel was being preached far and wide. "Shut door" was *redefined* to mean that it was just shut against those who had heard the Millerite message, and that of October, '44, and rejected it, as well as those who first believed and then fell away; those who had no opportunity to even hear the message to begin with were still subject to salvation, if they accepted the message.

This brings us to Ellen White. What part did she play, and did any of her "visions" teach the original shut door doctrine? Did she teach that theory herself through the late 1840's? Well, *she claims the negative!* In *Selected Messages*, Volume 1, page 63, she admits what "shut door" originally meant, and that she did believe that in common with the rest. But, she insists that this was *before* her first vision, and that her visions corrected the error:

"For a time after the disappointment in 1844, I did hold, in common with the advent body, that the door of mercy was then forever closed to the world. This position was taken before my first vision was given me. It was the light given me of God that corrected our error, and enabled us to see the true position."

This statement is the worst kind of deception, but has been readily accepted by Adventist apologists. However, Robert Olson, of the White Estate, in his paper *The "Shut Door" Documents*, page 5, insists that the above quotation does not mean she "immediately" realized that the door was *not* shut against the world at the very time of her first vision. He claims that she gradually, over a period of time, came to see the "true" interpretation of her visions and the open door. Even if Olson is correct, it took Ellen White six years to finally wake up, as we shall see. If it is true that she *never* had a vision that taught

the classic "shut door" doctrine, it is strange that she never had a vision that condemned it as error either! She should have been condemning the error all those years, by inspiration, and straightening out her husband, Bates, and the rest. There is no doubt that she had to "reinterpret" her former statements. She *did* teach by "vision" and otherwise the same "shut door" the others were preaching, and in later years had to cover that up. But, that coverup is readily exposed. When we consider that she is supposed to be the inspired interpreter of the Scriptures, making them clear and plain, it is a little difficult to understand that she would have so hard a time getting the "shut door" straight in her visions. Further, when we look at the facts we find that her visions taught the classic "shut door" theory, and that she preached it as the truth. In a letter to J. N. Loughborough, on August 24, 1874, she said the following in defense of her past teaching:

"I hereby testify in the fear of God that the charges of Miles Grant, of Mrs. Burdick, and others published in the *Crisis* are not true. The statements in reference to my course in forty-four are false. . . . With my brethren and sisters, after the time passed in forty-four I did believe no more sinners would be converted. But I never had a vision that no more sinners would be converted. And am clear and free to state that no one has ever heard me say or has read from my pen statements which will justify them in the charges they have made against me upon this point. . . . I never have stated or written that the world was doomed or damned. I never have under any circumstances used this language to any one, however sinful. I have ever had messages of reproof for those who used these harsh expressions." *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 74.

*Nothing could be further from the truth*, and there is no Adventist apologist that can cover this up. We shall see shortly that *after the time passed in forty-four*, Ellen White, along with the rest, *abandoned the shut door theology*, and *it was her first vision that reestablished it with the others!* That is contrary to her statement that she believed the whole thing before her first vision and it was revelation from God that corrected the error.

Her first vision is claimed for December, 1844. It was not printed until it appeared in *The Day Star*, January 24, 1846. It was also printed in the broadside of April 6, 1846, and again in May, 1847 in James White's booklet, *A Word to the Little Flock*. In 1851, in *Experience and Views*, the *most pointed shut door statements were deleted*, and were from that time on in all subsequent printings. In the quotation below, the deleted portion of this section has been emphasized. This is just a small part of the "vision" that deals with the Advent people, and the reestablishing of the positions taken concerning October 22, 1844:

"Others rashly denied the light behind them, and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out leav-

ing their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and got their eyes off the mark and lost sight of Jesus, and fell off the path down in the dark and wicked world below. *It was just as impossible for them to get on the path again and go to the City, as all the wicked world which God had rejected.*"

Here apostates, or feinthearted Adventists, wound up with the rest of the world, and it was impossible for them to be saved. She attempted to deal with this deleted statement in 1883. In *Selected Messages*, Volume 1, page 62, after noting the statement she says: "It is claimed that these expressions prove the shut-door doctrine, and that this is the reason of their omission in later editions. But in fact they teach only that which has been and is still held by us as a people, as I shall show." Well, let's see what her husband, James, had to say about it:

"When she received her first vision, Dec. 1844, she and all the band in Portland, Maine (where her parents then resided) had given up the midnight-cry, and shut door, as being in the past. It was then that the Lord shew her in vision, the error into which she and the band in Portland had fallen. She then related her vision to the band, and about sixty confessed their error, and acknowledged their 7th month experience to be the work of God." *A Word to the Little Flock*, 1847, p. 22.

Note what he says. After the failure of October 22, the group had given up the midnight cry and *the shut door*; it was not in the past, but yet future. What turned them around to renew their faith in all of that, including the shut door, was *Ellen White's vision!* And, the "shut door" they had given up before the vision, and the one they preached following that vision, was that *opportunity for salvation for the world was over!* But, we have a statement about this vision from Ellen White herself, so that we can clearly see the purpose and intent of it. First, notice her attempt to deny having gotten her ideas from anyone, especially Joseph Turner. Remember from a previous quotation in this article that Joseph Turner was an avid "shut door" advocate, believing there was no hope for the world and no use wasting time preaching to them. Notice her joy in finding that her first vision was in perfect agreement with Turner's views. (We will not deal at this point with the apparent fact that she could very well have gotten her ideas from overhearing conversations going on around her in the house). Secondly, notice her second vision was also used to confirm others in the shut door doctrine:

"Brother Bates, you write in a letter to James something about the Bridegroom's coming, as stated in the first published visions. By the letter you would like to know whether I had light on the Bridegroom's coming before I saw it in vision. I can readily answer, No. The Lord showed me the travail of the Advent band and midnight cry in December, but he did not show me the Bridegroom's coming until Feb-



ruary following.

"Perhaps you would like to have me give a statement in relation to both visions. *At the time I had the vision of the midnight cry I had given it up in the past and thought it future, as also most of the band had.* I know not what time J. Turner got out his paper. I knew he had one out and one was in the house, but I knew not what was in it, for I had not read a word in it. I had been, and still was very sick. I took no interest in reading, for it injured my head and made me nervous.

"After I had the vision and God gave me light, he bade me deliver it to the band, but I shrank from it. I was young, and I thought they would not receive it from me. I disobeyed the Lord, and instead of remaining at home, where the meeting was to be that night, I got in a sleigh in the morning and rode three or four miles and there I found Joseph Turner. He merely inquired how I was and if I was in the way of my duty. I said nothing, for I knew I was not.

"I passed up (to the) chamber and did not see him again for two hours, when he came up, asked if I was to be at meeting that night. I told him, no. *He said he wanted to hear my vision* and thought it duty for me to go home. I told him I should not. He said no more, but went away.

"*I thought, and told those around me, if I went I would have to come out against his views, thinking he believed with the rest. I had not told any of them what God had shown me, and I did not tell them in what I should cut across his track . . .*

"Very early next morning Joseph Turner called, said he was in haste going out of the city in a short time, and *wanted I should tell him all that God had shown me in vision. It was with fear and trembling I told him all. After I had got through he said he had told out the same last evening. I rejoiced, for I had expected he was coming out against me, for all the while I had not heard any one say what he believed.* He said the Lord had sent him to talk the evening before, but as I would not, he meant his children should have the light in some way, so he took him.

"There were but few out when he talked, so the next meeting I told my vision, and the band, believing my visions from God, received what God bade me deliver to them.

"The view about the Bridegroom's coming I had about the middle of February, 1845, while in Exeter, Maine, in meeting with Israel Dammon, James, and many others. *Many of them did not believe in a shut door.* I suffered much at the commencement of the meeting. Unbelief seemed to be on every hand.

"There was one sister there that was called very spiritual. She had traveled and been a powerful preacher the most of the time for twenty years. She had been truly a mother in Israel. *But a division had risen in the band on the shut door. She had great sympathy, and could not believe the door was shut.* I had known nothing of their difference. Sister Durben got up to talk. I felt very, very sad.

"At length my soul seemed to be in agony, and while she was talking I fell from my chair to the floor. It was then I had a view of Jesus rising from His mediatorial throne and going to the holiest as Bridegroom to receive His kingdom. They were all deeply interested in the view. They all said it was entirely new to them. The Lord worked in mighty power, setting the truth home to their hearts.

"Sister Durben knew what the power of the Lord was, for she had felt it many times; and a short time after I fell she was struck down, and

fell to the floor, crying to God to have mercy on her. When I came out of vision, my ears were saluted with Sister Durben's singing and shouting with a loud voice.

*"Most of them received the vision, and were settled upon the shut door.* Previous to this I had no light on the coming of the Bridegroom, but had expected him to this earth to deliver His people on the tenth day of the seventh month. I did not hear a lecture or a word in any relating to the Bridegroom's going to the holiest." Letter B-3-1847, Letter to Joseph Bates, July 13, 1847, White Estate, (emphasis added).

The letter speaks for itself. Israel Dammon, in whose home the second "vision" was received, was just as much an avid shut-door advocate as Joseph Turner. Though she does not relate her second vision in the letter to Bates, it appeared in the broadside of April 6, 1846. Note the following portion from it:

*"Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and the most of those who were bowed down arose with Him; and I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after he arose, and they were in perfect darkness."* (Emphasis added)

In her letter to Bates she says that this vision established the band on the shut door. That was in February, 1845. The "shut door" position that her first two visions confirmed was the exact position presented by Turner and Dammon, and the one believed by all of this group for the next several years. Remember, that years later, Ellen White would say that she had never had a vision advocating the "shut door" position, nor had she ever preached it. We have seen that this is not so, but there is more evidence to come.

Otis Nichols was a very close friend of the Whites. He is mentioned in several issues of their paper. He was an engraver who made up many of the Adventist charts of the early years. Ellen Harmon stayed in his home in the Summer of 1845, and in 1847 James and Ellen White named their first born son Henry Nichols White after Otis Nichols' son, Henry. In 1850 Ellen White had a "vision" at the Nichols home that was recorded by Hiram Edson. Nichols wrote several articles and letters that were printed in the papers of the day. With this close connection with Ellen White established, Nichols would certainly know what was being presented by the "visions" and preaching of Ellen White. In a letter in April, 1846, to William Miller, he attempted to convince Miller to back Ellen White. He says: "What I have written I have a knowledge of and think I can judge correctly. Sister E. has been a resident in my family much of the time for about 8 months." Among the things Nichols says is the following:

"At the time she first went out to deliver her message (Jan. 1st, 1845), she was scarcely able to walk across the room and could not speak with

an audible voice, but she had perfect faith in God and was carried in this state a few miles to deliver her messages and when she came to speak her voice was nearly gone but God fulfilled his word, gave her strength of body and a clear loud audible voice to talk nearly two hours with tremendous power and effect on the people and without fatigue of body, and from that time for many weeks she continued to travel day and night talking almost every day until she had visited most of the advent bands in Maine and the easterly part of New Hampshire. Her message was always attended with the Holy Ghost, and wherever it was received as from the Lord it broke down and melted their hearts like little children, fed, comforted, strengthened the weak, and encouraged them to hold on the faith, and the 7th month movement, and that *our work was done for the nominal church and the world, and what remains to be done was for the household of faith.*" (Emphasis added.)

This last statement is classic "shut door," and is the message that her visions presented and exactly what she preached!

The first Adventist to write on what was to become the "Sanctuary" doctrine was O.R.L. Crosier. He was with Hiram Edson in the cornfield the morning after the disappointment of October 22, 1844 when Edson got the flash of thought that started the sanctuary business. After extensive study with Edson and F. B. Hahn, Crosier was designated to write up their conclusions for publication. This appeared in the *Day Star* extra of February 7, 1846. This convinced James White, Joseph Bates, and others on the subject of the Sanctuary and its cleansing. The following letter was written to D. M. Canright, December 1, 1887 by Crosier:

"Elder D. M. Canright — I kept the seventh day nearly a year, about 1848. In 1846, I explained the idea of the sanctuary in an article in an extra double-number of the *Day Star*, Cincinnati, O. The object of that article was to support the theory that the door of mercy was shut, a theory which I and nearly all Adventists who had adopted William Miller's views, held from 1844 to 1848. Yes, I *know* that Ellen G. Harmon — now Mrs. White — held the shut door theory at that time. Truly yours, O.R.L. Crosier." Ballenger-Mote Papers.

In 1849 Ellen White wrote a brother and sister Hastings. The letter is full of "shut door" statements and ideas. Let's look at part of it:

*"I saw Brother Stowell of Paris was wavering upon the shut door. I felt that I must visit them. Although it was fifty miles off and very bad going I believed God would strengthen me to perform the journey. We went and found they needed strengthening. There had not been a meeting in the place for above two years. We spent one week with them. Our meetings were very interesting. They were hungry for present truth. We had free, powerful meetings with them. God gave me two visions while there, much to the comfort and strength of the brethren and sisters. Brother Stowell was established in the shut door and all the present truth he had doubted. . . . We came to this place yesterday;*

found our dear Brother Nichols' family as well as usual, steadfast in the faith, and strong in all the present truth. . . . I will now write you the vision God gave me on the Sabbath, the 24th of March. We had a glorious meeting. I was taken off in vision. *I saw the commandments of God and shut door could not be separated.* . . . I saw that as God worked for His people, Satan would also work. . . . My accompanying angel bade me look for the travail of souls for sinners as used to be. *I looked but could not see it for the time for their salvation is past.* Dear Brother and Sister, I have now written the vision God gave me. I am tired sitting so long. Our position looks very clear. *We know we have the truth, the midnight cry is behind us, the door was shut in 1844 and Jesus is soon to step out from between God and man.*" Letter 5-1849, White Estate, (March 24-30, 1849), (emphasis added).

Some statements from the letter were deleted from the printed versions later. But, the meaning is clear. The reference to Otis Nichols standing fast in the faith, and knowing what Otis Nichols believed through those years, along with allusions to other doctrines surrounding shut door theology, makes it clear that Ellen White preached the "shut door" position energetically.

Perhaps the strongest shut door statement is made in what is referred to as "The Camden Vision." It was dated June 29, 1851. The date is a matter of controversy. The only source of a complete copy of the "vision" came from the critics of Ellen White. It was, like other visions of Mrs. White, copied by someone else, though evidence suggests that Ellen White did write it out and sign it at some time. The Adventists have tried to deny it as authentic. Francis D. Nichol gives space to trying to prove she was not even in Camden on the date given, so it must be spurious. Regardless of all that, however, the evidence shows that the vision, as given, is authentic. Let's note some statements from it first:

"Then I saw that Jesus prayed for his enemies; but that should not cause US or lead US to pray for *the wicked world, whom God had rejected* — when he prayed for his enemies, there was hope for them, and they could be benefitted and saved by his prayers, and also after he was a mediator in the outer apartment for the whole world; *but now his spirit and sympathy were withdrawn from the world; and our sympathy must be with Jesus, and must be withdrawn from the ungodly.* I saw that God loved his people — and, in answer to prayers, would send rain upon the just and unjust — I saw that now, in this time, that he watered the earth and caused the sun to shine for the saints and wicked by our prayers, by our Father sending rain upon the unjust, while he sent it upon the just. *I saw that the wicked could not be benefitted by our prayers now — and although he sent it upon the unjust, yet their day was coming.* . . . Then I saw concerning loving our neighbors. *I saw that scripture did not mean the wicked whom God had rejected that we must love, but he meant our neighbors in the household, and did not extend beyond the household; yet I saw that we should not do the wicked around us any injustice; — But, our neighbors whom we were to love, were those who loved God and were serving him . . .*" (emphasis added).

Many of the same statements and sentiments were made previously by others. Some of these can be found in other quotations in this chapter. In 1866, in the *Review*, Uriah Smith, editor of the paper, had a series of articles defending the visions of Ellen White. These articles were later printed in booklet form under the same title. On page 20 of the booklet, Smith says:

"Our only proper course here, therefore, is to confine ourselves to what has been published under sister White's own supervision, and by her own authority, and what appears in manuscript over her own signature in her own handwriting."

Further, a short article in the *Review*, June 12, 1866, page 16, highly commends the article by Smith, stating that they were read by several leading ministers and approved for publication, and that most of the manuscript was read before the sessions of the General and Michigan State Conferences, who approved their publications also. J. N. Andrews wrote in the *Review* of August 14, 1866, page 16, a hearty recommendation of the articles, as did C. O. Taylor a month later. They urged a careful and multiple reading of the articles. With those endorsements in mind, we note in Smith's article of June 19, 1866, page 18, and reprinted on pages 27-28 of his booklet, these statements about the visions. The sentences that are emphasized are directly from the Camden vision:

"Now what are the representations of the visions in relation to this time? Do they teach a more exclusive shut door than Scripture facts and testimonies which we have presented? In their teachings we find such expressions as these: 'I saw that Jesus finished his mediation in the holy place in 1844.' 'He has gone into the most holy, where the faith of Israel now reaches.' *'His Spirit and sympathy are now withdrawn from the world, and our sympathy should be with him.'* *'The wicked could not be benefitted by our prayers now.'* *'The wicked world whom God had rejected.'* It seemed the whole world was taken in the snare; that there could not be one left, (referring to Spiritualism). 'The time for their salvation is past.' "

There can be no doubt that Smith had a copy of the Camden vision before him when he wrote the articles, and not only accepted it as authentic, but presumed the readers would too. We also note that the leading Adventists read and approved the articles for publication, and thereby accepted it as authentic. We note that Smith said that only those visions would be defended that were published under Ellen White's direction, or were approved by her, or appeared over her signature in her own handwriting. The Camden vision would have to be accepted in that number. Any discrepancy in date is of no consequence, for whatever the date, the vision was authentic. It takes the same "shut door"

position for Ellen White all the way from October, 1844, to some time in 1851, and it was the "shut door" position that Smith was defending Ellen White against in the above section of his writing; that included the Camden vision.

In the *Review Extra* of August, 1851, her first vision was reprinted with the deletion of all shut door statements. For five years after that no "visions" appeared in the paper. By the end of that time the "shut door" had been *redefined*. It is no wonder that in later years she would want to blot out any exposure of her former teachings by deletions of statements made, reinterpretation of her visions, or by simple denial of guilt. However, her part in the shut door episode, and subsequent change, tags her as a false prophetess! And, there is much more evidence that could be presented on this than we have noted thus far.